ANTIQUARIAN BOOKS : AUCTIONS : BOOKS FOR SALE AND WANTED : CATALOGUES

FELLOWSHIPS

LECTURES & MEETINGS

BUSINESS SERVICES

© TIMES NEWSPAPERS LIMITED, 1980
Printed and Published by Times Newspapers Limited at New Printing House Square, Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8EZ, England. Telex: 264971. Monday, October 20, 1980. Issue no. 4048 Registered as a Newspaper at the Post Office. ISSN 0307-661X.

ANNOUNCEMENT

COURSES

PERSONAL

PUBLIC & UNIVERSITY

OVERSEAS

FOR SALE & WANTED

GENERAL VACANCIES

LIBRARIANS

LIBRARIANS

T·L·S
THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

FRIDAY • 31 OCTOBER 1980 • No 4048 • 40p

"The Broombrush", by Wyndham Lewis, one of his "tyro" drawings, reproduced in his magazine The Tyro *No. 1. In a letter to John Quinn in 1921 Lewis wrote: "I am doing a book of forty of these Tyro drawings . . . this satire is a challenge to the Arts-for-Arts-sake dilettantism of a great deal of French work today (and the Bloomsbury-Bell-Grant-Fry section of English)." See also illustrations on page 1215 and page 1217.*

Remembering Pasternak and Akhmatova by Isaiah Berlin

The Jonestown massacre; The life of Sydney Smith

Wyndham Lewis— an artist and his armour

Bunyan's poems and pamphlets; Seamus Heaney as critic

Virginia Woolf's suicide

Fiction: Beryl Bainbridge, Russell Hoban, Paul Theroux, Frederic Raphael

Commentary:

Alan Bennett's 'Enjoy', Jonathan Miller's 'Shrew'

Eric Korn on literary prizes

'The Songs We Know Best' by John Ashbery

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

OCTOBER 31 1980

contents

An artist and his armour

By Bernard Bergonzi

JEFFREY MEYERS:
The Enemy
A Biography of Wyndham Lewis
391pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £15.
0 7100 0514 8

JEFFREY MEYERS (Editor):
Wyndham Lewis
A Revaluation
276pp. Athlone Press. £13.50.
0 485 11193 4

TIMOTHY MATERER:
Vortex
Pound, Eliot and Lewis
231pp. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press. $12.50.
0 8014 1225 0

FREDRIC JAMESON:
Fables of Aggression
Wyndham Lewis, the Modernist as Fascist
190pp. University of California Press. £7.25.
0 520 03792 8

In the nineteen-twenties Wyndham Lewis presented himself to a philistine world as the Enemy. The enmity was duly returned. Twenty-three years after his death he is regarded with unenthusiastic respect as one of the "men of 1914" and a pioneer English modernist in art and letters; theses are written about him and, as these books show, he is becoming the subject of academic studies. But people find it difficult to speak well of Lewis: he is thought of as a fascist, a racist, a sexist, a man whose opinions, delivered with brutal provocativeness, were repugnant to the liberal consensus. Nevertheless, extreme and uncompromising controversialists seem, by some law of intellectual life, to attract passionately devoted followers. Accordingly, there are Poundians and Leavisites; and a small but articulate band of Lewisites, working hard to get due recognition for the Enemy. Still, it would be idle to pretend that he is very widely read, even if his novels are easier to obtain than they once were.

Some major modernist texts, once thought difficult and subversive, have been quite easily assimilated and incorporated into the general practice of novel reading, and subsequently canonized by academic syllabuses. Young readers can now respond very comfortably to, or, as they put it, "relate to", *A Portrait of the Artist* or *The Rainbow*. It is difficult to imagine them feeling in the same way about the hard, aggressive, seemingly inhuman comedy of *Tarr*, which was written at the same time as those novels. Last year *Enemy News*, the newsletter of the Wyndham Lewis Society, published an odd little item reporting that a lecturer in English at University College, Lampeter, had found that his students reacted with "universal antipathy" to *The Revenge for Love*, a much more approachable novel than *Tarr*.

Jeffrey Meyers is not a Lewisite; indeed, his reservations about Lewis are wide and deep. But he has done the Enemy good service by writing his life and editing a volume of essays about him. The biography is solid and well documented, without being pointlessly massive or tediously long; there is probably more material to be drawn on, and aspects of Lewis's deliberately mystified life remain to be illuminated. But Mr Meyers provides the basic record of Lewis's personal story and his career as painter, novelist, critic and polemicist at large. He is particularly helpful in his account of Lewis's earliest years, showing what a tangled but potent set of influences he grew up with. His father was a wealthy, idle American dilettante, who had had his moment of glory fighting in the Civil War, and apart from a little dabbling in business did nothing much for the rest of his life. Lewis's mother was a British girl of Scots-Irish stock, who married at the age of sixteen. Percy Wyndham Lewis was born in 1882 on his father's yacht, when it was moored at Amherst, Nova Scotia; he was christened in Montreal, and throughout his life kept Canadian nationality, which enabled him to serve as a war artist with the Canadian army during the First World War and to live freely in Canada during the Second.

Lewis spent the first six years of his life on the East Coast of the United States, in Maine and on Chesapeake Bay; there were no other children who survived. Then in 1888 the family moved to England. When Lewis was eleven his father ran off with a housemaid and never returned. Thereafter Lewis and his mother lived a peripatetic life of shabby-genteel poverty in and around London. There was always some money, though, received unreliably and in insufficient amounts from Lewis senior and the paternal family, and Lewis was given a conventional English middle-class education, culminating with two fairly unhappy years at Rugby. Between the ages of sixteen and nineteen he studied painting at the Slade and began a lifelong friendship with Augustus John. From 1901 to 1908 he was an art student on the Continent—based in Paris, where he lived the kind of life later rendered in *Tarr*—but also spending time in Brittany, Spain and Germany. During these years Lewis began writing as well as painting. He read Nietzsche and Dostoevsky and acquired an advanced European culture which gave him ideas and interests uncommon in young Englishmen of his generation. He also became an energetic and ruthless coureur *de femmes*.

"Self-portrait as a Tyro", by Wyndham Lewis. Lewis described the Tyro as an "elemental person". "These immense novices brandish their appetites in their fucus, lay bare their teeth in a valedictory, inviting, or merely substantial laugh." See also page 1217, and the cover.

He remained very close to his mother, who continued to support him as best she could and, without husband or other children, concentrated all her love on him. Lewis returned her devotion and wrote very frank letters to her from Paris, telling her about his current amours and intended seductions. For the present-day reader the flip phrases of social science hover, waiting to be invoked: "disturbed childhood . . . one-parent family . . . excessive dependence . . . inability to form mature relationships". Undoubtedly much of Lewis's later behaviour originated in those early experiences, and Fredric Jameson remarks in a footnote to his book that Lewis "cries out for a psychobiography of the quality of those of Sartre or Erikson". Meyers does not attempt anything so ambitious, perhaps wisely, though near the beginning of his book he does quote Freud to the effect that "a man who has been the indisputable favourite of his mother keeps for life the feeling of a conqueror". Meyers's judicious, even-handed narrative does not conceal the fact that Lewis grew up to be an unpleasant human being, without many redeeming features. This is a hard statement, but the evidence is there; he was bullying, arrogant, ferociously selfish, paranoid, evasive, hyper-sensitive. The other men of 1914 were difficult personalities, certainly, but they had attractive qualities: Pound was celebrated for his generosity to fellow-artists; Eliot, however personally buttoned-up, did much service for public and intellectual life as editor, publisher and committee member; Joyce was unmanageable in the pursuit of his art, but an affectionate family man. There is no point in being moralistic, but Lewis was evidently a man with many, many problems: "They fuck you up, your mum and dad./They may not mean to, but they do."

All the same, he had loyal friends, some of whom he kept to the end of his life. Women seem to have been attracted throughout, though he left a trail of discarded mistresses and unacknowledged bastards behind him. After the art-students of Paris, Lewis went sexually upmarket when he returned to England. One gets the impression from Meyers's account that many of the cleverest, most beautiful and well-born women in London were queueing up at Lewis's door to be treated, more or less, like dirt. One notes this, not without resentiment, as a prevailing ontological problem in the relations between the sexes, and no doubt the kind of thing that gets discussed behind the closed doors of women's consciousness-raising groups. In 1918 Lewis met a young art-student called Anne Hoskyns, with whom he lived—allowing for many affairs on the way—for the rest of his life, though they did not marry until 1930. Lewis always called her "Froenna", derived from a German equivalence's description of her as "Frau Anna". In his way he seems to have been devoted to her, though it was a very odd way, which involved keeping Froenna as invisible as possible. Friends and regular visitors to Lewis's studio had no idea that he was married, and even to those who became aware of Froenna's existence she was often no more than a pair of hands passing dishes through a serving hatch. Despite his earlier illegitimate progeny, Lewis refused to have any children by Froenna, presumably because he would have had to recognize them. But there is a strange tenderness in certain portraits of his wife painted in the late 1930s, and, in a different way, in his fictional representations of her as Margot in *The Revenge for Love* and Essie in *Self Condemned*.

Lewis may have been a conqueror where women were concerned, but his professional and social relations were liable to end disastrously; in particular, he had a compulsion to quarrel with people who might have helped him. One such early quarrel, which had lastingly bad results, was with Roger Fry, over decorations commissioned from the Omega Workshop in 1912. Meyers gives a detailed account of the quarrel and convinces me that Lewis was in the right; but as a result of it, Lewis earned the intense and undying opposition of the Bloomsbury group—who previously had been well disposed towards the young artist and writer—which certainly harmed his later reputation. His alienation from his contemporaries was extended by the satirical overkill of *The Apes of God*, and in the early 1930s he quarrelled with Charles Prentice, his editor at Chatto and Windus, who had been a keen admirer of Lewis's books and published many of them. Jeffrey Meyers sums up the decline in a melancholy paragraph:

> *The Apes of God* was the first of a long series of tactical errors and personal disasters that oppressed Lewis during the 1930's. His book in praise of Hitler (1931) damaged his literary career in the same way that the quarrel with Fry hurt his artistic progress. These ill-advised works were followed by his break with Chatto and Windus in 1932, the withdrawal of three of his books between 1932 and 1936, the serious illness that plagued him from 1932 to 1937, his association with Sir Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists, his two unpopular Right-wing political tracts in 1936-37, the rejection of his portrait of Eliot by the Royal Academy in 1938, and his ill-timed and ill-fated exile to North America in 1939. Lewis was indeed self-condemned; his greatest enemy was himself. . . Lewis's political opinions intensified the neglect of his literary works and made him one of the loneliest figures in the intellectual history of the thirties.

One of the irritants in Lewis's later years was being frequently confused with D. B. Wyndham Lewis, a comparatively light-weight Catholic humorist and biographer. In referring to this confusion Meyers falls into one himself, when he says that D. B. Wyndham Lewis wrote under the pseudonym of "Beachcomber"; in fact he called himself "Timothy Shy"; "Beachcomber" was J. B. Morton, another Catholic humorist and biographer.

Meyers's criticism of Lewis's books, whether fiction or polemic, is cautious and sensible but at the same time quietly dismissive of a good part of the oeuvre. He remarks, "Too many of his imaginative books—like *The Childermass* and *The Apes of God*—had great promise but limited success. They start brilliantly and evoke an exciting visual quality, but gradually disintegrate, go on too long, and finally seem over-written, tiresome and unreadable." Meyers is unhappy with the anti-humanistic side of Lewis, expressed in the hammering polemics and paranoid pamphleteering, the emphasis on hardness and exteriority, the preference of the mechanical to the organic, and the reduction of human beings to animated puppets. After Lewis's long illness in the 1930s, Meyers suggests that he became more humanistic, as is apparent in the great portraits of Pound and Eliot and his wife—though the quality of his painting declined sharply after his ill-judged departure for the United States and Canada—and in fiction with *The Revenge for Love*. For Meyers, Lewis's greatest novel is *Self Condemned*, a bitter, tragic and powerful distillation of the self-knowledge that came to Lewis in his North American exile. Meyers interestingly compares it with *Women in Love* as a civilian response to wartime pressures, and to Trilling's *Middle of the Journey* and Mann's *Doctor Faustus* as a tragedy of intellectual defeat. At the end of *Self Condemned* Lewis explicitly disowns the ideology that had informed his earlier personal aesthetic: the commitment to exteriority, extolling the hard carapace

over the soft organic mess within. His persona, René Harding, an evident projection of many of Lewis's own attitudes, is reduced to a "giscin shell of a man", in a fate that is a living death. I share Meyers's high opinion of this novel; but one has to point out that it is a work of traditional, quasi-auto-biographical fictional realism. As always with Lewis, the prose is sharp, colourful and original. But the book marks a retreat from the innovating modernism of Lewis's early writing, exemplified in *The Wild Body*, *Enemy of the Stars* and *Tarr*.

Jeffrey Meyers economically reprints his discussion of *Self Condemned* in the volume of essays on Lewis that he has edited. The title, *Wyndham Lewis: a Revaluation*, is slightly misleading, since one cannot revalue what has not, in any systematic way, been valued. It is an uneven collection, with the Lewisites well represented. Meyers's introduction reflects his own uncertainties about Lewis, whom he refers to as "perhaps the liveliest and most stimulating intellectual force in modern English literature". If one is going to use superlatives one should have the courage to do without that pusillanimous "perhaps"; and what, I wonder, would the author of *Time and Western Man* and *The Diabolical Principle and the Dithyrambic Spectator* have made of "lively" and "stimulating" as terms of high praise? The finest essay is certainly John Holloway's "Machine and Puppet: a Comparative View", which engages, with sensitivity and insight, in a comparison between Lewis's pictorial art and his fictional prose. Such comparisons between one art and another are difficult to do at all, and almost impossible to do convincingly; nevertheless, John Holloway shows common ground between the different media, in respect of Lewis's concern with machines and puppets; what interested Lewis, he argues, were two contrary movements: "That of humanity into machine, and that of the puppet who, wonderfully, reanimates into humanity". Marshall McLuhan, who had befriended Lewis in Toronto, contributes a brief but suggestive note on Lewis's prose style. E. W. F. Tomlin, writing on Lewis's philosophical influences, is informative and judicious about his dealings with Bergson, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, though he makes Lewis seem a much more conceptually coherent thinker than he ever appears to be on the page.

One of the most solid essays is by a French Lewisite, Bernard Lafourcade, on *The Wild Body*, discussing first, in a scholarly way, the various drafts and stages through which Lewis's early stories passed before they were made up into a volume; and then moving on to some quite acute critical reflections. Lafourcade asks, in passing, "out of what timorous superciliousness the critics have refused to contemplate the supreme fatuous of applying Freudian analysis to a notoriously complex, secretive and aggressive author?" The fear of what Lewis himself might have said about such a procedure is one possible though inadequate answer. Wendy Stallard Flory does in fact offer a psychologically directed account of *Enemy of the Stars*, with interesting results, seeing the Hanp-Arghol division as reflecting opposed drives within Lewis himself. Alistair Davies provides an illuminating reading of *Tarr* as a largely Nietzschean novel, and concludes with a disturbing Nietzschean flourish of his own, which recalls Lewis at the height of his anti-humanistic phase: "We must not attribute to *Tarr* that inner spiritual depth, that moment of tragic insight, the glimpse of resolution or immortality with which classical or Christian fiction ends. For these conclusions are those of a sentimental, banal, herd culture". This has an almost fascist ring, though it also echoes, in a different key, the rigorous anti-humanism of current Marxist-structuralism, a connection inside explicit in Fredric Jameson's book.

Some of the contributors seem to share Lewis's ideological stances, while nearly all the others are tolerant or neutral. Even Valerie Parker, writing on a sensitive topic —"Lewis, Art and Women"— restricts herself to level-headed exposition without overt judgment. The one exception is William M. Chace, who plays the devil's advocate in this company, writing about Lewis's politics in a polemically attacking way. If any kind of consensus emerges from this book it is that three novels are central, *Tarr*, *The Revenge for Love* and *Self Condemned*, and that everything else is still a matter for argument. Simon Edwards insists that *The Apes of God* is "one of the major pessimistic achievements of literary modernism" and a neglected masterpiece, but that novel, for all the brilliance of its prose and the colossal energy directing it, is not, I think, likely to emerge very far from neglect; there is too little to transcend its obsessive concern with minute, unimportant quarrels. Comparisons with *The Dancies* are wide of the mark, and, significantly, both Jeffrey Meyers and Fredric Jameson agree in finding it unreadable. The best of the essays in this collection suggest new ways of reading and assessing Lewis, though none of the contributors produce the optimistic perceptions of some of Lewis's earlier critics; such as, for instance, Eliot, who reviewing *Tarr* in 1918 said, "In the work of Mr Lewis we recognize the thought of the modern and the energy of the cave-man"; or Edgell Rickword, who wrote in 1931 apropos of *The Apes of God*, "latterly his energy has been spent in a reckless way; one is reminded of a powerful man tormented by gnats. The apostolic fervour with which the campaign for their extermination develops threatens to become a breathless pursuit of the insignificant". (Rickword's essay, reprinted in his *Essays and Opinions 1921-31*, is an outstanding critique of Lewis.)

Timothy Materer contributes an essay to *Wyndham Lewis: A Revaluation* on Lewis's dealings with three elder writers or artists, Augustus John, W. B. Yeats, and T. Sturge Moore, all of whom he admired; Materer suggests that they to some extent played the role of the vanished father in the pattern of his life. In *Vortex: Pound, Eliot, and Lewis* Materer deploys a similar comparative approach on a larger scale. The book is not easy to classify; it brings together biography, literary and art criticism, and cultural history and renders them down into a kind of soup which is palatable but not very sustaining. Vorticism as a movement was invented by Pound and Lewis in the early months of 1914, and publicized in *Blast*; Eliot had no connexion with the movement in its origins, but published some of his early poetry in the second and last issue of *Blast* in 1915. For Lewis Vorticism was primarily a movement in painting, design and sculpture, in which Edward Wadsworth and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska were associated. It marked a particular phase in his life, which certainly did not survive the First World War. Pound saw it as his role to provide a literary dimension to Vorticism—as Lewis later confessed in *Time and Western Men*, he was nor much impressed by these attempts—and tried to keep alive the idea of Vorticism; as late as 1936 he was proposing a revival of *Blast* to Lewis. Towards the end of his life, in the catalogue of the Tate Gallery exhibition in 1956, "Wyndham Lewis and Vorticism", Lewis wrote with extensive finality, "Vorticism, in fact, was *Tarr*, which Jameson places "among the most characteristic monuments to the aristocratic-bohemian cosmopolitan intellectual European culture of that period, whose most substantial expression is *The Magic Mountain* of Thomas Mann". The First World War destroyed that society and brought in a new libidinal apparatus, which turned Lewis in the direction of proto-fascism and political onslaughts on the established order.

Jameson reads Lewis as a great political writer, with an unsurpassed insight into the dehumanized culture of his time, and much preoccupied with how far a self is possible in the Age of Reification. He was a man of rich revolutionary potential, who could—and should—have been on the Left, but whose petty bourgeois insecurity make him anti-Marxist and deflected him to proto-fascism. There is nothing inherently impossible in this analysis, even though Lewis lacked the humanitarianism that is usually a starting point for such a commitment, however tough or bloody minded it becomes in practice. The label "fascist" has been applied, often in a simple abusive sense, to Pound, Eliot, Yeats and Lawrence; there seems to be more ground for calling Lewis at least a "proto-fascist", because of his aggressive and authoritarian temperament, his anti-liberal convictions, his sense of society as an inert mass or herd to be manipulated; and also because, unlike any of the other major englishmen modernists, he had fought in the First World War, the matrix of Fascism, which he deeply affected Céline and Drieu la Rochelle and Henry Williamson, not to mention Hitler and Mussolini and Mosley. Lewis's self-image, in his prodigiously productive phase of the late 1920s and early 1930s was not a hard, cold, armoured figure, contemptuously standing aloof from the soft, swirling mass of democratic society, which is in love with time and flux and unheroitically dominated by Jews, primitivists, homosexuals and women. This image, of the archetypal Enemy, can easily be seen an embodiment of fascist rhetoric and fascist iconography.

To a conventional reading of Lewis's career, like that of Jeffrey Meyers and the contributors to his book of essays, we have put up with the nasty side of Lewis in order to take the good art that went with it, and then move on, with some relief, to the later, humanistic phase of his writing and painting. But Jameson, reading Lewis through Althusserian spectacles, is not so soft or evasive;

> . . . his artistic integrity is to be conceived, not as something distinct from his regrettable ideological lapses (as when we admire his art, *in spite* of his opinions), but rather in the very intransigence with which he makes himself the impassioned registering apparatus for forces which he means to record, beyond any whitewashing and liberal revisionism, in all their primal ugliness.

If one believes that the primary—indeed, the only—purpose of art is to unmask, to reveal ideological conflicts and contradictions, and that this purpose has nothing at all to do with the artist's conscious aims, then such a view of Lewis will seem plausible. But if one believes

Three drawings by Wyndham Lewis, of Ezra Pound, Rebecca West, and Julian Symons. Lewis described his first meeting with Rebecca West as follows: "she was a dark young unusual . . . who burst through the dining-room door (for she was later like a thunderbolt." These pictures, as well as those reproduced on the cover and on page 1215, are taken from the catalogue to the exhibition of Lewis's work currently at the City of Manchester Art Galleries, until November 15 (128pp, with 167 illustrations, eight in colour, Lund Humphries in association with the City of Manchester Art Galleries, Paperback, £6.95, 0 85331 434 9). The catalogue, by June Farrington, is excellently documented, and is introduced by Sir John Rothenstein. It also contains a study, "What was Vorticism?", by Richard Cork, and "Wyndham: an appreciation", by Omar S. Pound. From Manchester the exhibition will move to Cardiff (until January, 1981), and from there to Edinburgh until March).

that there is much more to art than that, then Jameson's approach creates more difficulties than it resolves.

There is a rather sinister relish about his analysis, as though across the decades and the deep ideological divide, he finds a commendable affinity between Lewis's anti-humanism and Althusser's. His book, for all its coolness and toughness, is affected by the atmosphere of recent Marxist-structuralist thought, so oddly reminiscent of the era of alchemy and astrology, where ideology permeates every aspect of life, nothing is ever what it appears to be, and hidden but irresistible forces dominate human behaviour. At the same time, Jameson confirms my suspicion that Marxist-structuralism is such a perverse mode of discourse that no one can keep it up for long, and that when its practitioners' attention lapses they slip, despite themselves, into conventional literary criticism. Thus, Jameson says of *Self Condemned*:

> In this novel, then, unconscious material rises dangerously close to the surface. With that unemphatic honesty so characteristic of him, Lewis here always seems on the point of blurting out the truth, both in himself and in us; and *Self Condemned* is surely the closest he ever came to self-knowledge.

This is surely true; but it is strange to find such a judgment, rooted in Lewis's personal situation, being made by a critic whose method does not permit him to think in terms of selves and individuals; Jameson has no business to speak of "self-knowledge", and believing, as he writes elsewhere in the book, that critics is a bourgeois mystification, he should not use such old-fashioned ethical terms as "honesty" and "truth". Stripping the mask from this critic, I perceive that beneath the sophisticated and learned deployment of Marxist, structuralist and psychoanalytic terms and concepts, there is one mere marginalized intellectual of apocalyptic tendencies, lost in the Age of Reification; he actually uses phrases like "at this late hour in Western culture". Once again, it is closing time in the gardens of the West.

And, yet, despite everything, *Fables of Aggression* contains some of the best criticism that anyone has ever written of Lewis. Put simply, it is evident that Jameson greatly admires Lewis, is excited and disturbed by his writing, and has erected an elaborate system of special pleading to justify what is in fact a personal and instinctive admiration. He is, of course, right to try to read Lewis in a historical and political context as well as in a personal and psychological one, though the concept of "libidinal apparatus" is too abstract and cumbersome to take seriously. Fortunately it does not stop Jameson from getting close to Lewis's texts and reading them acutely. Long ago Eliot remarked that there is too much, except to be very intelligent; Jameson's book suggests an amendment to this dictum, to the effect that any method can serve provided that the critic is very intelligent, which Jameson certainly is. He makes excellent sense of the way Lewis's style works, and shows how Lewis pitches verbal cliché against gestural cliché, producing a fearlessness of perception from the clash. There is a particularly illuminating chapter showing how Lewis anticipated Beckett in manipulating what Beckett later called the a pseudo-couple", an opposed but closely linked mole pair, with many literary antecedents: Beuvord and Pécuchet, Faust and Mephistopheles, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. Lewis exemplifies them in Hanp and Arghol in *Enemy of the Stars* and Pullman and Satters in *The Childermass*. Jameson writes, in distinctly Lewisesque prose, of "the very element of Lewis' novelistic world, this combative, exasperated, yet jaunty source of monads in collision, a kind of buoyant truculence in which matched and abrasive consciousnesses slowly rub each other into smarting vitality".

As these books show, Lewis is now being increasingly written about; whether he is being any more widely and appreciatively read remains uncertain. Particular puzzles and contradictions recur throughout them. Lewis's contempt for the aesthetich of the ego and for Romantic self-expression went along with an essentially Romantic egoism and cult of the artist in his own writings. Indeed, one might argue that an assertive literary neo-classicism, of the kind that Lewis flaunted in the 1920s, is, in our century, a further version of Romanticism. Lewis disliked modern civilization because it reduced men to the status of puppets and machines, yet depicted them as such in his own painting and fiction. There seems to be a division between importance and value in Lewis, which is implied by several of his critics but not brought clearly into focus. That is to say, Lewis was without doubt a major modernist innovator; in painting and design with the abstraction and near-abstraction of the years 1912 to 1915; in prose with *The Wild Body*, *Enemy of the Stars*, and *Tarr*; and in cultural politics with *Blast* and Vorticism. These works and activities imply an anti-humanist attack on bourgeois order, which, as Jameson correctly points out, has affinities with the iconoclasm and radicalism of the proto-fascism which emerged from the First World War. But what most writers about Lewis—Jameson apart—seem to value, to "relate to", are those works of the late 1930s and after where he returns to a humanistic mainstream; the serene paintings of Ellet, Pound and his wife; *The Revenge for Love* and the powerful but traditional realism of *Self Condemned*. A sufficiently flexible and pluralistic criticism can come to terms with these paradoxes. But Lewis remains what he always was, a very difficult man to deal with.

The Selected Works of Alfred Jarry, edited by Roger Shattuck and Simon Watson Taylor (280pp, Eyre Methuen, £3.95, 0 413 47400 3), first published in 1965, has now been reissued as a paperback. This selection from Jarry's eight volumes of published works include *The Ubu Cycle*, various symbolist and other poems, essays and extracts from his fiction. It also includes the whole of his "neo-scholastic novel", *Exploits and Opinions of Dr Faustroll, Pataphysician*. When first reviewed in the *TLS* it was thought to "illustrate well the wide range of Jarry's style, the incredible erudition, and his total originality".

The opium of the people

By D. J. Enright

SHIVA NAIPAUL:
Black and White
215pp. Hamish Hamilton. £8.50.
0 241 10337 1

There was a kind of revelation that happened some decades ago, when the present reviewer was away in the rather far East. Consciousness, you might say, was raised, people discovered that they were persons, and whole hords of individualists came into being. It looked as if the Garden of Eden was soon to open its gates again. That is, if you think of the Garden of Eden as consisting largely of huge pools into which happy narcissists could *gaze ecstasise*, with perhaps a few bombshapes dotted about. Of course there was more to it than that: there was concern and compassion for the sick, the poor, the oppressed. The "Movement", a multifarious condition stretching from the most intensely introvert to the most explicitly and radically social and political, could not have assumed the proportions it did without the participation of the decent, the kind, the idealistic. In any group phenomenon of any size good and evil rub together, cheek against jowl, interlocked to such an extent that it needs God's specs to tell the one from the other.

One good thing that might be said for the bad old days (which, as it happens, the present writer remembers rather better) was that we were not continually digging ourselves up to see how we were growing. Little credit is due to us on that score. We were too busy, or too content not to be busy-bodies; charity began (where often it needed to) at home; do-gooders were suspect, either nosy parkers or agents of "Them", the distant powers that were; or we lacked feeling, we took human casualties for granted, every street had its idiot, its unmarried mother, its old witch; people were sent to prison because they had sought to rise above their station and (which was a disgrace) had been found out. Perhaps the opinion of the people was really working—though what exactly was it? Hardly religion. We didn't expect life to be a bed of roses, a Garden of Eden. Or if we did, or would have liked it to be, then we lacked the encouragement of the media, for we couldn't go on TV to air our problems, whether pre-menstrual stress, transvestism, indigence, ill luck or boredom. Ignorance was a kind of bliss, a very moderate one, for if you didn't know of possible remedies, then you thought less about the disease. It was a small world then. Or rather, it was a large one, but largely undocumented.

The foregoing passage of simplified social history is not entirely gratuitous. It serves as a background to the contemporary setting for his subject provided by Shiva Naipaul, who concentrates on the ludicrous or pathetic aspects of the "Movement", particularly those to be encountered in that New World, California. That is to say, the amalgam of best intentions and worst aspirations and lusts, ideals and low deals, honest outrage and self-indulgence, pug-righters and prima donnas, the reform of society, the destruction of the same, militant pacifism, the amelioration of minorities, black panthers and white backlashers, identity-seeking (or "Personal Growth"), feminism, care of the aged, "relevant" education for the young, ecology, macrobiotics, drugs, subversion and its twin, counter-subversion, Hare Krishna, Zen, bra-burning, ghetto-burning, student protest (there is mention of the cartoon showing a girl arriving at Berkeley wearing a blank button: she didn't know what the issues would be that semester), open marriage, civil liberties, the Flithy Speech Movement, Gestalt-O-Rama, communes. . . . Shiva Naipaul is right to see out the matter at some length, for (a) it is germane to the People's Temple and the self-massacre at Jonestown, (b) it is something of a relief from Jonestown, and (c) it cites our Jonestown, a subject rich in surmise but very poor in facts.

We must allow Shiva Naipaul his lacerated feelings, for few of us can entertain his trip let he undertook. It is no great wonder that for him feministe wave "hairy arms" about, and the unfortunate whole features as just another sloppy or creepy fad. In Guyana he was beset by a person with a "narrow, shiny face", "pinched lips", "spiky, yellowing teeth", and a voice that simultaneously rasped and wheedled, who wanted to buy his foreign currency. Shiva Naipaul was upset by "the completeness of his corruption, his degeneracy. He was an exhibition of the moral decay I could sense all around me". I am here reminded of foreign business man living in some style in South-East Asia and complaining at cocktail parties about the bribes they (or their companies) have to hand out, often to poorly paid minor officials, in the interests of honest trade. It used to be the flag that trade followed. . . . But writers, especially if they happen to be novelists, are always glad of a symbol, and perhaps it was the teeth that did it. Possibly, like his brother V. S., Shiva Naipaul occasionally confuses affronts to his sensibility with outrages against morality.

Yet, repelled as he (and most of us) must be by the very languages of soul-soving and faith-healing, he makes valiant and, I would think, successful efforts to be fair to Jim Jones and the People's Temple. Jones must have possessed charisma, and he certainly provided a service: a blend of socialism, agricultural community work, harmony between old and young, and racial brotherhood (blacks and whites lived together, and eventually died together)—a service which gathered in, like some new Statue of Liberty, the tired, the poor, the wretched refuse of society, drug addicts, alcoholics, the lonely, the frightened, the refugees from established churches, and no doubt more pure idealists, and which did work, for a time. Even defectors from the cult spoke of the hope they had gained, the love they had learnt to give and to receive. "The power of love was just overwhelming. It just hit you as you walked through the door", said one. And another, earlier: "No more drugs, no more racism, no more rapes, no more prisons or jails".

It was after 1970, according to one witness, that things began to go wrong: drugs used to sedate troublesome residents, beatings for disabedient children (relayed over speakers for the encouragement of others), semi-starvation, censorship of mail and telephone calls, cherubim with fiery swords posted to keep people in instead of out . . . The Temple had moved from Indianapolis to the "sylvan enclave" of Redwood Valley in California, then to San Francisco, and in 1974 to the Co-operative Socialist Republic of Guyana and to what Shiva Naipaul calls "a marriage made in heaven". (It is alleged that the residents of Jonestown, though American citizens, had voted in the referendum that empowered Forbes Burnham to rewrite Guyana's constitution in his own liking.) By now there had been attacks on the Temple in the American press, reinforced by affidavits from defectors from the cult, and a body called the Concerned Relatives had come into being, led by a man whose daughter was one of Jim Jones's mistresses. For the Concerned Relatives Jones was a mixture of Hitler, Stalin and Satan. For Jones the Concerned Relatives were a gang of racists, terrorists, saboteurs, agents provocateurs, out to overthrow the successful anti-capitalist "co-operative lifestyle" of the People's Temple.

In November 1978 Congressman Leo Ryan led a delegation of Concerned Relatives and reporters to investigate the community. At the airstrip near Jonestown they were ambushed by Jones's men and several were killed, among them the Congressman. The game—which had never been a game—was up. Jones had prepared his flock for possible recourse to mass suicide: not the suicide of defeat and despair, but "an act of revolutionary suicide protesting the conditions of an inhuman world". Forthwith some 900 of his followers, adults and children, took or were helped to take cyanide mixed with Flavor-Aid—a potion proverbial, we are told by a young doctor devoted to the *I Ching*—while Jones encouraged them in this new and final move in words recorded on tape. "Lay down your life with dignity. Don't lay down with tears and agony. Stop this hysterics. This is not the way, for people who are socialistic communists to die. We must die with some dignity." The marriage made in heaven was abruptly dissolved. In the place of their heroic socialist partners, the Guyanese government found themselves left with a lot of [illegible] American corpses.

While Shiva Naipaul could have achieved greater narrative shape but he dodged about rather too, it is not his fault that Jonestown remains a mystery. The testimony in the case ores as contradictory as diverse, as heaven and hell, or black and white, and by this account none of the witnesses is trustworthy beyond doubt. Only if the audit had lived there could he have hoped to be more exhaustive and certain, and then he would not have been able to tell the tale at all. Jones was fairly obviously paranoid in an extreme but, if one may put it that way, not without reason. The question in radical circles then remains the end he was being fed hypnotic or stupefying drugs by the CIA seems far-fetched. But even the truly concerned relatives played an exacerbating part, and it appears likely that the CIA had infiltrated the group. If so, then this is another demonstration of that agency's awful power to destroy what they are ostensibly striving to save, in a not dissimilar way the actions of the eco/ego movements could conceivably end in sinking the species threatened whole. In 1978, incidentally, Jim Jones was named Humanitarian of the Year by the *Los Angeles Herald*. With friends like these around it is better to look for enemies, since what men seek to destroy they sometimes save. Sometimes.

Clint Eastwood, *Black and White* is a soul-destroying, alarming, depressing book; in part, a tribute to its subject's assiduity, fortitude and powers of expression. It shows again how necessary belief is to humans, and how humans will believe anything, undergo almost anything, in order to preserve their belief. It shows yet again how dire beliefs can be in their effects on both their holders and their enemies; one man's bliss is another's death, if not his own. A defector whose son died in Jonestown is reported as saying, at the end of it all, "People don't give up their dreams easily." Sometimes it became necessary for Lenin, in *The Winter's Tale*, to believe that his wife was unfaithful to him. She replied: "My life stands in the level of your dreams. Which I'll lay down." In the event she didn't have to, quite. But then, *The Winter's Tale* is just a tragi-comedy.

Setting the record straight

By Kyril FitzLyon

NEIL BALFOUR and SALLY MACKAY:
Paul of Yugoslavia
Britain's Maligned Friend
335pp. Hamish Hamilton. £15.
0 241 10392 4.

In 1972 the thirty-years rule made available for inspection a number of official documents, which no doubt helped the author of Prince Paul's obituary in *The Times* to write his article in September, 1976. The present book by Neil Balfour (Prince Paul's former son-in-law) and Sally Mackay is, in effect, an expansion of that obituary (with source references added). Unfortunately, however fully the newly available information vindicated the ex-Regent, probably most people in this country who know anything about him owe their knowledge to such sources as the war-time press and propaganda, as well as Churchill's Memoirs and Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. From these, say the two authors, people learnt that Prince Paul was a Nazi sympathizer, a quislingand a traitor, who aimed at depriving the boy-king Peter of his throne and perhaps murdering him, and who concluded, against the wishes of his country, a pact with Hitler's Germany and the other Axis powers, stabbing neighbouring Greece in the back. However, King Peter escaped from Paul and the Palace by climbing down a drain-pipe and, subsequently, led the nation's spontaneous revolt against the Regent and the pact. The Belgrade coup succeeded in holding up Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union and thus indirectly contributed to eventual Allied victory.

It is Balfour's and Sally Mackay's case that none of this is true.

They stress that on the eve of the war Paul appealed to the British Government to encourage Anglo-Soviet trade so as to counteract German economic influence; he also repeatedly appealed for arms to enable him to resist Axis pressure. These appeals went unheeded. The authors quote Churchill's April 1939 note to the then Prime Minister Chamberlain warning him that as a result of Britain's inaction Greece and Yugoslavia "will be forced to make the best terms possible with Berlin and Rome". Churchill's own government was, therefore, in the authors' view, hardly justified in urging Paul to resist German pressure (and vilifying him when he did not succeed) while admitting its inability to help him. In November, 1940, the British Foreign Office itself advised Paul to "abandon" Greece (in effect—cede it to Hitler) and withdraw to "old Serbia". Paul refused and, seeing no way out, agreed to implement the Regency Council's unanimous decision to join the Tripartite Pact.

For from escaping from the Palace and the Regent to lead the Belgrade revolt in protest against the pact, King Peter was totally unaware of its having taken place and wept when forcibly separated from Paul and his family. Even if "for propaganda purposes the British government made out that it was a strictly Yugoslav rebellion", the coup, according to the authors, was, in fact, engineered (at least partly) by the British SOE and probably MI6, and they quote the Defence Committee's official thanks to Dalton (head of SOE) "for the part played by his organization in bringing about the coup d'état in Yugoslavia".

Moreover, the authors suggest, the generally accepted version that the coup contributed to the Allied victory by delaying Hitler's invasion of Russia is the precise reverse of the truth: it did not delay it, it facilitated it. Contrary to propaganda, Paul's agreement with the Axis forbade the passage of their troops through Yugoslavia, nor did it permit the transport through it of Axis war materiel.

It is difficult to say how seriously wartime allegations were taken in British official circles (though internal FO memoranda seem to suggest they were); nor how much of it was due to wartime psychosis. Certainly Paul's brother-in-law, the Duke of Kent, continued to write friendly letters to him in his Kenyan internment, the British King and Queen received him almost immediately after the war and he was never deprived of his Order of the Garter. Moreover, the Greek King, whom Paul was accused of having stabbed in the back, not only refused to accept this version of Paul's behaviour but, to the embarrassment of the British Ambassador, invited him to stay in Greece when he was forced out of Yugoslavia after the coup. After the war Paul continued to be on friendly terms with King (by then ex-king) Peter of Yugoslavia until Peter's death in 1970. Paul died six years later at the age of 83.

Sir John Balfour (no relation of Neil Balfour), commenting in *The Times* after Paul's death on his personality and record as a statesman, referred to the "shabby behaviour" towards him of some people in this country who ought to have known better. This book does much to justify the bitterness of his remark.

The Chronology of World War II: The Day by Day Illustrated Record 1939-45 (200pp. Marshall Cavendish. £7.95. 0 85685 864 1) has been compiled by Christopher Argyle. Fully illustrated with photographs and newspaper headlines, the book includes an index and glossary and concise biographies of the major personalities. Ten key turning points in the course of the war are selected for background analysis and for easy cross-reference, major events are highlighted in bold print.

Two poems by John Ashbery

The Songs We Know Best

Just like a shadow in an empty room
Like a breeze that's pointed from beyond the tomb
Just like a project of which no one tells—
Or didja really think that I was somebody else?

Your clothes and pantlegs leekin' out of shape
Shape of the body over which they drape
Body which has acted in so many scenes
But didja ever think of what that body means?

It is an organ and a vice to some
A necessary evil which we all must shun
To others an abstraction and a piece of meat
But when you're leeking out you're in the driver's seat!

No man cares little about fleshly things
They fill him with a silence that spreads in rings
We wish to know more but we are never sated
No wonder some folks think the flesh is overrated!

The things we know not all get learned in school
Try to learn a new thing and you break the rule
Our knowledge isn't much it's just a small amount
But you feel it quick inside you when you're down for the count

You look at me and frown like I was out of place
I guess I never did much for the human race
Just hatched some schemes on paper that looked good at first
Sat around and watched until the bubble burst

And now you're leekin' good all up and down the line
Except for one thing you still know in mind
It's always there though often with a different face
It's the worm inside the jumping bean that makes it race

Tee often when you thought you'd be showered with confetti
What they flung at you was a plate of hot spaghetti
You've put your fancy clothes and fleshy gems in hock
Yet you pause before your father's door afraid to knock

Once you know the truth it tried to set you free
And still you stood transfixed just like an apple tree
The truth it came and went and left you in the lurch
And now you think you see it from your lofty perch

The others come and go they're just a dime a dozen
You react to them no more than to a distant cousin
Only a few people can touch your heart
And they too it seems have all gotten a false start

In twilight the city with its hills shines serene
And lets you make of it more than anything could mean
It's the same city by day that seems so crude and calm
You'll have to get to know it not just pump its arm

Even when that bugle sounded loud and clear
You knew it put an end to all your fear
To all that lying and the senseless mistakes
And now you've got it right and you know what it takes

Same day I'll look you up when you're both old and gray
And talk about those times we had so far away
How much it mattered then and how it matters still
Only things look so different when you've got a will

It's true that out of this misunderstanding could end
And men would greet each other like they'd found a friend
With lots of friends around there's no one to entice
And don't you think seduction isn't very nice?

It carries in this room against the pointed wall
And hangs in folds of curtains when it's not there at all
It's woven in the flowers of the patterned spread
And lies and knows not what it thinks upon the bed

I wish to come to know you get to know you all
Let your belief in me and me in you stand tall
Just like a project of which no one tells—
Or do ya still think that I'm somebody else?

Or in My Throat

To the poet as a basement quilt, but perhaps
To some reader a latticework of regrets, through which
You can see the funny street, with the ends of cars and the dust,
The thing we always forget to put in. For him

The two ends were the same except that he was in one
Looking at the ether, and all his grief stemmed from that;
There was no way of appreciating anything else, how polite
People were for instance, and the dream, reversed, became

A swift nightmare of starlight on frozen puddles in some
Dread waste. Yet you always hear
How they are coming along. Someone always has a letter
From one of them, asking to be remembered to the boys, and all.

That's why I quit and took up writing poetry instead.
It's clean, it's relaxing, it doesn't squirt juice all over
Something you were certain of a minute ago and now your own face
Is a stranger and no one can tell you it's true. Hey, stupid!

Policing the frontiers

By Valentine Cunningham

PAUL THEROUX:
World's End
211pp. Hamish Hamilton. £6.50.
0 241 10447 5

Like their author—who has given the kiss of life to the Travel Book in Our Time—Paul Theroux's fictions do their travelling extremely well. Their continual theme is the International one baptized familiarly by a whole bunch of East Coast Americans — all those Burbanks keenly armed with their Baedekers, the Adamses and Jameses and Tom Eliots, thrusting eagerly into Paris or Venice or London with only the occasional weather-eye cast cagily back on Boston, looking up and looking up to the Old Word with fitful spasms of wondering whether they shouldn't also be looking down on it. And Theroux, Massachusetts man in self-chosen exile in London, knows what tradition he's in. "I am in Paris", a courier tells himself over and over, mixing his feelings, in a story entitled, after the poem of T. S. Eliot, itself taken from the novel of Henry James, "Portrait of a Lady".

What helped the International Theme resonate was its ambivalent relations with the Imperial one. The naiff and sentimental traveller came over in the same boat with the looter and pillager. And merely hookish and hooked on great houses though he seemed—just one more academic spectacled sod (who preferred the British Museum to God)—his greedy gulping down of Europe's cultural stuff did have a disconcerting way of getting mixed up with what the barbarian did to the library at Alexandria or Lord Elgin's manner with other people's marbles. Pierpont Morgan creamed dusty *comtes* of their porcelain and *tapisseries*; James's millionaire Verver scours about for pieces to send home to his museum in American City; "mature pasts", asserted Eliot, "steal". How events—centred on Henry Ford or Lévi-Strauss, on Coca-Cola or Chilean minerals or, whoever—have borne out James's astute connections between imperialism (whether political or cultural) and acquisitiveness! And Paul Theroux's fictions in this gatherum are special not (less) because of his know that that old Jemesian border between vultures and culture vultures still needs watchful prowling.

You might, you see, have thought all the Romans had been gently recycled into, so to say, mere Italians ("We are Romans turning into Italians": the lady writer of Theroux's story "Zombie" repeatedly savours the phrase). But Theroux, without once mentioning Chile or Vietnam, will rebukingly show you the old Roman banastructure beneath the American skin of Rabsarge the London-based "supplier of drilling equipment for offshore oil-rigs", or Floyd just back from a Peace Corps stint in Samoa, or Jerry the mendacious Bostonian gaining his end briskly way in Africa, or Professor Bloodworth of the U. Mass. (or can it be Amherst College?) vacationing in Kent and acquiring literary manuscripts for cash by hockdoor methods, outgunning even the other busy acquirers in his Department.

Relievingly, Theroux's wryness over all this does not let him run to glumness. The final story in this collection, for instance, the hilarious "Acknowledgments", leaves the reader to reconstruct the awful transatlantic predations that have enabled its narrator to write his biography of Cosket the "minor West Country dialect poet". Precisely what "requests", one is made to wonder, did Miss Sloughtor "accede to"? In what ways did Miss Champneys make herself "available to me"? What sort of guest takes "three months of hospitality", even at "Limpets"? Just how did "Ruck and Crutchfield, Barristers-at-Law" bring to a "speedy end" what could have been a piece of protracted legislation"? And so on: chouffaring, wives and aphrits, loans of bikes and cars, freebie rail tickets, typing and collating (thanks to Heidi and Joylene of Wrighton's Graduate Section of British Studies), even a new aristocratic wife ("to Dame Marina Pensel-Cripps, casually met on the 10:24 to London, but hardly remembered, I am grateful for an introduction to the late Sir Ronald and to Lady Mary Busselthw, of Busselsaw Castle"), they have all come exploitatively easy. If this be British Studies, it is also tragi-comic Blitzkrieg.

Theroux is, of course, adept at superintending the particular Italian-Roman frontier because he is so good about frontiers in general. He not only takes after those old frontiersmen James and Conrad (the anarchistic London of Theroux's *The Family Arsenal* impressively reflected the impress of both of them), but after Conrad's distinguished disciple Graham Greene. Thro Theroux mix of travel books and fictions about travelling is done, I suppose, much more closely after the Greene recipe than any other. And like Greene, Theroux keeps animating the lust for frontier excitements and their attendant anxieties. In "The Greenest Island", a story about a pair of New York students stuck in seedy despair is Puerto Rico which does not need its punning title to alert one to its resounding indebtedness to the master, Duval craves and misses out on "a frontier" ("Loim was not as he had imagined, a shady corner at the forest's edge, a frontier"). Elsewhere, a United States Consul just out of South-East Asia holidays in Saarbrücke, egged on by feelings straight from Green: "'I like these border towns', I said. 'The smile guilty, the rigmarole at the customs post, the rumours about smugglers—it's a nice word smugglers. I associate borders with mystery and danger.'"

Harper of "Portrait of a Lady" is precisely a modern smuggler, trained at the Harvard Business School, illegally carting frozen cash to Boston for investment in the United States. But, in their way, all Theroux's frontier-crossers are smugglers—smuggling displaced selves into alien places, perpetually a risky business. Harper plays with Eliot's ploy with *cauchemar*: "What is cauchemar in English?" a Jesuit French tutoyée requires. "Nightmare." "So beautiful" she said." As for Rabsarge, he "had taken a great risk. He had transplanted his family—his wife and small boy—from their home in America to a bizarrely named but buried-alive district called World's End in London". It's the kind of yearing—and Theroux is superlatively deft at granting a sense of place, with a few adroit touches, a name or two, a bit of local lingo ("Nut half!" exclaims Rabsarge's Englished son)—that never overcomes the sense of displacing. At first Rabsarge feels securely at home in his corner of London. As James felt London "to be the right place", Rabsarge "saw England as upholding the domestic reverences that had been tossed aside in America", that when mistrust of his wife is sparked by his small boy's chat about "Mummy's friend", he is suddenly "saddened by the thought that he was so far from home".

The hard notion that displacement means dislocation is one Theroux keeps reworking. Serving the Peace Corps in Samoa has permanently disrupted Floyd's sense of home, family, who "we" are ("Imagine finding your roots in Samoa!" quips his aunt as he salivates over memories of tropical menus). Just learning some English and trying it out on a randy London hotel porter has transformed a mild Dutch lady's life. Even old age can exile: Miss Bristow's estrangement from her childhood West ladies is doubled by her old person's unwillingness to take on up-to-date liberal attitudes in blacks. Nicely indeed Theroux keeps showing how people get stuck on the borders they took to cross or hope they have crossed. The folks left at home notice changes, but the foreigners persist in noting foreignnesses. In "White Lies", Jerry believes himself cursed by his black mistress; but the deceptions he practises and which man's ones: for him there will be no black magic. The exile, in short, may shift his place but is doomed to remain himself. Paula and David of "The Greenest Island" "were waiting for everything to change, and nothing had changed", "which way I fly is hell": it is a hellishness that Greene, as well as Milton, would recognize.

It does have to be said that Theroux's *World's End* prefers to hang to its whimpers (making Joe Harper "thought he heard" the French girl "whimper with satisfaction"). However impotent they may be, Theroux's lament-notes are the small fry and hold-overs, the children and hangers, the Italians no less, of our modern Roman colonies. And however dangerous or endangered they are, they do seem a mite safer within the comfortably knowable four walls of publishers' parties, quotes from Eliot, and echoes of well known authors' lives (Miss Bristow is a version of Jean Rhys, the Peace Corps gets mixed up with R.L. Stevenson on Samoa). Showpieces do rather tend that way. It is as museums, then, of Theroux's painful way with these short tales that even the slightest of his fisted fictions should seem packed with such poignantly impacting punch.

Being kind to objects

By Peter Norman

TOM ROBBINS:
Still Life With Woodpecker
277pp. Sidgwick and Jackson £6.95
(£3.50 paperback).
0 283 98714 6

Tom Robbins's last novel, *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues*, was released in paperback in a blaze of publicity; readers may remember their local bookshops adorned with the image of a hikini-clad, he-stetsoned cowgirl sprouting from a giant thumb-joint. A sprawling, picaresque fantasy, it sometimes seemed intent on ruvering every topic in the New American Novelist's handbook: feminism, ecology, sex (both gay and straight), mystical religion, the nature of time . . . Nevertheless, it was an engaging piece of work, demonstrating intelligence, wit and an exhilliert delight in the artifice of novel-writing. Robbins is something of a literary conjurer, intruding his authorial voice adroitly into the plot, frequently flying off into passages of zany erudition, and only occasionally lapsing into plain silliness.

The new novel also has a striking jacket: a pastiche of a packet of Camel cigarettes, with a woodpecker replacing the camel. A packet of Camels plays an essential part in the plot, revealing to the heroine her entrenched "animale chouvinism". Analogous to racism, sexism and speciesism, this is the denial of the relationships that exist between inanimate objects and ourselves. (At this point one remembers a shade uncusily that there was recently a craze in the United States for having a pet stone).

The novel takes place in "the last quarter of the 20th century"—the phrase is a repeated motif. It relates the meeting (at an ecological "Cere Fest") and subsequent love affair between Leigh-Cheri, an all-American princess of a disposed royal line, and Bernord Mickey Wrongle, alias The Woodpecker, an anarchistic bomber and self-styled "outlaw". He is captured and imprisoned; she, intent on answering the novel's recurring question "How to make love stay?", tries to remain close to him by mimicking his experience, living as a recluse in her parents' attic. When he rejects this as a futile gesture, she agrees to marry a fabulously wealthy oil-shelk and, having been introduced by her solitary incarceration with the packet of Camels to the mysteries of pyramid-power, demands a new, fully-sized pyramid as a wedding gift. The story's climax is her reunion with Bernard in the inner sanctum of this pyramid.

Readers of *Cowgirls* may feel divinely now that *Still Life With Woodpecker* is basically more of the same; certainly anyone who liked the former will enjoy the new novel. Little of its flavour can be transmitted by a summary of the plot, since plot for Robbins is one of the least important ingredients. As in the previous novel, there are outrageously surreal similes; there are pithy sophistical excursions, this time into the nature of love, the importance of choice, and the possibility that everything is connected with everything else; there are semi-serious theories about red-bearded gods in spaceships (shades of Von Daniken here), lunacy-as-contraception (a notion in the body of the phases of the moon) and much else. I say semi-serious because Robbins gives the impression that he would dearly love to believe in everything, but his real intellect—reminiscent at times of a bird-hard Gore Vidal—constantly undermines it.

Robbins is a Romantic in the Blakean tradition: life is contained in contraries, in opposites, and death is anything unchanging. Hence the book's emphasis on choice, which leads Bernard, the bomb-throwing, anti-Vietnam War terrorist, to state a preference for United States capitalism over Cuban communism; hence, too, Robbins's mistrust of the single-minded minority-group causes for which he feels instinctive sympathy, but against whose "tunnel vision" he rifle this romantic anarchism is imported by Leigh-Cheri's whole-food-eating, whole-protecting satisfi mellowness, but the dialogue remains rather underdeveloped—one of the disadvantages of the author's discursive style.

He is also a moralist, and although superficially he belongs to the "stoned" school of American fiction, along with Brautigan, Kesey, Vonnegut, there is a more interesting comparison to be made with the work of Aldous Huxley. Similarly inspired by drugs and eastern religion, he is concerned with "cleansing the doors of perception"; he has a similar love of irrelevant, arcane facts; a similar penchant for the grotesque; and above all, a similar tendency to use the novel as a kind of pulpit. There is more overt preaching here than in *Cowgirls*, and the characters—even allowing for the cartoon-surrealistic style of fresh books—are less fully drawn, a little more like mouthpieces; consequently there is a slight reduction in the exhilarating inventiveness that is his trademark.

However, this is certainly a novel which will cause the reader both to think and to write a good deal; a combination rare enough, in the last quarter of the twentieth century, to be a recommendation.

The Russian outing

By Anne Duchêne

BERYL BAINBRIDGE:
Winter Garden
157pp Duckworth. £5.95
0 7156 1495 9

Reading a Beryl Bainbridge novel has always been a special kind of experience, at once very funny, abrasive and intimate—rather like having a nasty sticking-plaster pulled off for you by an old friend: jokes, and the little unpleasantness briskly but tenderly dealt with, then drinks of relief all round. This new novel burns a good deal deeper than that; there is a minor operation to be performed, and drinks may be needed long before the end, as disquiet seeps in. If this writer's metaphors are ranged between "warm", as in, say, *The Bottle Factory Outing*, and "cold", as in *Young Adolf*, then *Winter Garden* opens and enters quite new and freezing latitudes, where even comedy fails to comfort.

The action concerns Ashburner (one need only optionally, and afterwards, seek any significance in the name), a conservative Londoner—an Admiralty lawyer indeed, he somewhere says—who goes out to Russia with a small official group of "artists", one of whom may be described, if perhaps a bit too institutionally, as his mistress. His wife, back in Beaufort Street, believes he has gone fishing in the Highlands, and he takes his rods and waders; he is a rather nervous, law-abiding man.

The idea behind the excursion, of course, is to enjoy a fortnight's illicit but untrammelled bliss with his inamorata, but Nina in fact disappears almost as soon as they arrive. Ashburner has to soldier on with Bernard, whose bloody-mindedness has made him much cherished on English television, and Enid, never very sharply defined but whose emanations of British grit and female hopelessness come through poignantly. The usual blunde interpreter called Olga is of only sporadic efficiency, and when the Secretary of the Artists' Union does sometimes practise a little sleuthing or eavesdropping this becomes quite reassuring until all the ambiguities.

This is all o good deal more acute than the usual Bainbridge territory, but the encounter promises high comedy, and none of that promise is disappointed. Miss Bainbridge's particular kinds of precision have always encompassed rather outdated epithets such as "dotty" and "dippy" and "loopy", and it is quite glorious here to see her dots and dips and loops inscribed across the vast, unblenching face of totalitarianism, which already contains so many quaint wrinkles.

Increasingly bemused by drink and sleeplessness and mysteries described and denied, the little group is whisked relentlessly about between official receptions and visits ("In an official car to a palace to take tea with a metal-worker"), nearly dies of cold in Moscow and Leningrad (in October?), and is overcome by heat in Georgia. Hotel restaurants are like hangars, "deserted save for a score of waiters, who for some seconds stared insolently at the new arrivals before disappearing into the shadows"; the road outside is being dug up by lady roadmenders. The visitors have all remembered to bring plenty of spare bathplugs.

Ashburner, confused by vodka and, as he supposes in his later paranoid stages, by drugs as well, is more disoriented than the others. Apart from losing Nine, he is treated as her husband and as a celebrated brain surgeon ("renowned for his remark that he'd never seen a pointing yet that wasn't improved by a decent frame"). He begins to hallucinate slightly, seeing Nine everywhere. By the time the group reaches Tbilisi, even the appearance of a dog releases powerful suggestions of humanly impossible freedom and health.

Miss Bainbridge, concerned as always to say nothing we cannot readily recognize, is quite marvellously deft, and it seems a pity to breathe too heavily on her images. Questions stir about the artist in society, naturally; but Nina's fitful appearances come to embody the hopeless delusions and indulgences of any romantic lilce; and the "winter garden", which in Chelsea was a emnless terrace where Ashburner's wife sometimes took skipping ropes on summer nights, becomes not only the whole sullenness of Soviet strictures, but beyond that a metaphor for both the labyrinth and the desert of life. Every denil—affectionate, ludicrous, nr monstrous—homes in on the final sentence: "Even a man who is sensible and composed, he thought, must pale before life's ruinrattications."

Along the way, readers who like seeking trace elements will find o good deal of Stevie Smith, swooping and snorting along the trajectory between the real and the romantic; and of Pinter at his best, in the blankness and delicacy with which the writing excurtines the mind. This time, though, in the final narrator, where the glacial confusions threaten to embalm Ashburner for ever, there is something of Kafka too. Comedy is secreted everywhere, like honey; but it is a surreal little honeycomb, with sharp teeth. It seems a pity we cannot, on Oriental lines, designate Miss Bainbridge a Minor National Treasure. She would not herself object to the "minor", one imagines; and certainly deserves oil the rest.

Bear-faced fictions

By Paul Taylor

ROBERTA SMOODIN:
Ursus Major
212pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
£5.95.
0 7100 0717 5

In the picaresque boro, blankness is all. Equip him with a subtly registering consciousness and the whole point of the form would be destroyed. It is with one of the modern versions of the picaresque, the American drop-out novel, that Roberta Smoodin in *Ursus Major* attempts to have some knowing fun. To begin with, her hero is a dancing bear. A cute idea? Not foc long once Ms Smoodin gets to work on it. She has, at least, no problems convincing us of the hero's blankness. This *tabula* is very *rara* indeed. Saying sophisticated things about experience through the bero's unsophisticated filtering of it is, of course, at the heart of the picaresque and by widening the gulf in this dramatic way, Ms Smoodin might seem to be on to a good thing. But there is less to this (as they say) than meets the eye.

The adventures begin when the bear escapes from two animal trainers, Joy and Ray, who have promoted him as a novelty dancing act on the circuit. His subsequent travels involve him first with a raucohy basket-ball team, then with an elegiac rock-group, the Ungrateful Wretches, and finally with a Hollywood film magnato who sees in the bear the dollar-spinning hero of family-entertainment films.

Having a bear at the story's centre enables Ms Smoodin to speculate sexily about the differences between animal and human perception and to make some gentle digs at various flawed aspects of the American dream. Not all the pseudo-energy of her rumbustious prose can quite bring this off, however. The enterprise (to be catty) is dogged by the bear: it involves Ms Smoodin in zoologically confused sentences such as this and it riddles the story with debilitating inconsistencies. You cannot have a bear whose "vast movie-screen consciousness" only registers, unreflectively, the present moment (much being made of this fact) and show him, at the same time, as being able to cope reasonably well with language and, for the purposes of the plot, actually remembering things.

There are, however, flashes of genuine wit and it is to be regretted that in her first novel Smoodin has saddled herself with a project that seems inherently unworkable. One fable, to wondering in view made the animalness of the hero could facilitate the sort of comic awareness of bucoan limitation that she is trying to achieve. *Ursus Major* provides a clue in its repeated references so animated cartoons. These are irritatingly frequent: a torch glows "like a cartoon stick of dynamite"; one of the female singers in the rock group has "a cartoon voice so pure and high it could only be the voice of some practicing Disney bird. In fact, an anthropomorphic vision of familiarity". And so on. Words are unnecessary to the project; in fact, they wreck it. A cartoon would be much more appropriate.

Occasionally a surreal humour glints from the pages. It is best exploited in the characterization of Cassy and Polly, the twin girl-singers with the rock band. They are a terrifying study in *folie à deux*, have developed their own private idioglossia, pose in institutions as one person (contriving to do half a college course each) and propose, horrifyingly, to have "radical" sex with the bear. Inventively and chillingly delineated, they prophesy better things to come from Ms Smoodin.

Catherine Aird's *Passing Strange* (202pp. Collins. £5.25. 0 00 231658 7) is another pleasantly unpretentious, satisfyingly neat Calleshire mystery. It begins at Almstone Flower Show, where the Fortune Teller's corpse is found behind a tent. Detective-Inspector C. D. Sloan investigates with his usual solidity.

T. J. Binyon

Taking of parts

By Nicholas Spoliar

ANNE TYLER:
Morgan's Passing
311pp. Chatto and Windus. £6.50.
0 7011 2532 2

The hero of Anna Tyler's new novel, Morgan Gower, is an inveterate role-player, a man who, as he says himself, "can't seem to take it all seriously". "It's as if I'm watching from outside", he remarks, ". . . You would suppose I'd planned on having other chances—second and third tries, the best out of three." In the course of the novel Morgan constantly has second and third tries, improvising and trying out new roles until he arrives at one that is completely appropriate, that of puppeteer. In the last section of the novel he passes himself off as someone else, acquiring the man's wife, job and name; the modest pun in the title is explained when Morgan's former wife puts his obituary in the local newspaper.

The subject of the novel is Morgan's disruption of two families, his own and that of the puppeteers, Leon and Emily Meredith. The book lacks the pace and suspense of Miss Tyler's last novel, *Earthly Possessions*, but is compensatingly funny, meditative and digressive, a study of family life told mainly from the points of view of the two characters who eventually opt out of it, Morgan himself, and Emily, the woman he ends up with. There are some excellent pen-portraits—Morgan's skeletal hay-coloured clerk, Butkins, his selectively forgetful mother, his resentful sister—as well as some effective set-pieces: a wedding, a disastrous weekend by the sea. Morgan's permutability is seen, on the whole, as a creative impulse, liberating him from the "normality" that in some of the other characters comes to appear so eccentric.

Like the puppets Morgan is "in pieces" ("maybe he'd arrived unassembled") until he has assigned himself a part; and he has a large wardrobe of disguises, "sailor outfits, soldier outfits, riverboat-gambler outfits", which look as if they have been salvaged from some travelling operetta. He can impersonate anyone from a glassblower to a Mohawk Indian high-rise worker, having even married in an effort to become more securely defined. We are given an ironic glimpse of Morgan drinking tropical punch (he is not a drinking man) and wearing white duck trousers in an attempt to "stay in character" while courting his wife.

Part of the charm of this novel lies in the levels of disguise that are spread through it. It is a book in which things tend not to be quite as they seem. The doctor who volunteers to help, in the first chapter of the novel, turns out to be the Walter Mitty-ish hero. Morgan, we discover, is not really married to his wife, being already secretly married to someone else (though his spousal of his earlier marriage may simply be another of his disguises). And in the puppet shows of the novel, the Third Son who wins the Princess is often an interloper, o certain "R. Van Winkle" without his beard: "Only Emily knew that he didn't belong, and it gave an extra edge to his performance she thought". The puppet-world of the novel is an unpredictable place—Beauty marries the Beast in the puppeteers' first show—but in this it simply reflects the world outside. The unconventional ending to "Beauty and the Beast", for instance, seems merely to anticipate the conclusion of the novel itself.

Anne Tyler succeeds in describing the extraordinary and the unexpected because, paradoxically, she is so good at evoking the commonplace. She has an eye for the oddness of "ordinary" life, of the things people take for granted and of the assumptions people make about what constitutes normal behaviour, and she makes us wonder whether Morgan is so extraordinary after all. It is consistent with this that the novel's "normal" characters do, during the course of the book, come to seem rather eccentric, possibly even more so than the novel's protagonist. Thus Leon Meredith is o "dangerous man" who flies into rages—and what could be odder than his departure to the tritenesa of his father's bank? Morgan's mother and sister, repetitively speaking "their chosen lines . . . es polished as the chorus of a poem", are, Morgan realizes, little other than "lunatics". Even Morgan's long-suffering wife, Bonny, comes to seem less than well-balanced, judging by her practical joke over the obituary, Miles Tyler's art is to reveal the strangeness of the ordinary and the banal, and her characters are always eccentric in a representative way: "You know how families are", Morgan's wife remarks to Emily, and indeed this is a novel which surprises us into recognition.

Leavin the worl behynt

By Jennifer Uglow

RUSSELL HOBAN:
Riddley Walker
220pp. Cape. £5.95.
0224 01851 5

Riddley Walker, as the name suggests, is e novel which courts obscurity. Perhaps twenty years ee a successful children's writer has taught Russell Hoban that our capacity to respond to the bizarre does not atrophy with age. Here he tells the story of a twelve-year-old "emnexion man" interpreting puppet shows in the year 2347 AD ("Duc Count") while the topography remains (just) recognizably that of East Kent.

Hoban's confidence in our ability to accept the strange allows him to tackle a problem which most futuristic writers evade. This is the recognition that toiel change, whether it be to post-holocaust desolation, as here, or to Utopian socialism, must involve a modification of consciousness which will be reflected in, and then structured by, our use of language. His solution is to imagine how language would evolve—or rather decay—in a disrupted society. Only the showmen and their interpreters are literate, and since words are heard rather than read spelling follows pronunciation, multisyllabic forms are broken, and prose rhythms echo those of speech. The result is easy to follow once you can "hear" the language being spoken with a rural accent: "Us running that boer thru thet litti scrump of woodling with the forms all coun."

The significance of Hoben's bold experiment is that the concepts embedded in language reveal the history and ruling principles of o society and the way these ace internalized by individuals. Here, grafted on to the earthy colloquialisms, is a corrupted computer-jargon which "provides the words for thought. Entrapping the lates from what litti datter weve got wa pirntow", while speco imagery embodies religious yearning, and ideorant healers are described as "clinnicklog and neutonal healilog".

While the language expresses a cosmologia for an age of high technology, the roots of that language are lost to the people, who wrench e living from barren soil, hunting and gathering, farming, excavating old machinery for metal, allowed by regarded as pets of killer dogs. Their existence is given o cultural ae well as physical solidity. It has hereditary systems, "Big Men" and "talwomen", embryonic guilds of dyers and charcoal burners, formal transactions in "hash and rizlas", folk tales, rituals and children's games. In a horseless land where rumour precedes news, a remote government maintains control with the help of "hevys" and the propaganda of touring puppet shows. It is Riddley's job, like that of his father before him, to interpret these "cow-shit shows" to his particular band.

Such a vividly created world cannot fail to capture the imagination. Unfortunately the setting is vastly more interesting than the feverish and portentous action which takes place there. Stung into revolt by the discovery of an ancient Punch figure (the original subversive, the old Adam), Riddley becomes caught up in a feud between the Ardship of Cambry, leader of the Eusa folk, radiation mutants kept hidden beneath the ruins of Canterbury, and their overlords the Pry Bitmeer and Wes Mincer. The struggle for power is synonymous with the search for power, the old energy sources which were also the means of mass death. Eventually they discover only the "Litti Bitmeer" (gunpowder) and not the "I Big I", and the cycle of destruction has started again.

The obscurity of plot, language, puppet-show symbolism, fable, rhyme and riddle is compounded towards the end of the novel by the hero's difficulties in interpreting the puzzles around him. He learns first that inner power lies in renunciation, "The onlyes power is no power", and then that "Its not the aiucgling for Power that where thu Power is. . . . Its tuning in to the worl its leavin the worl behynt . . . ." In the cathedral crypt he tunes in to the continuity of history, thu promise and indifference of natural renewal, the unending circle of birth and death. The riddles which he ponders are the central paradoxes of mystical religion—the still centre of the turning world, duality in oneness, the perpetual dance of atoms in a motionless stone—but the language is Riddley's own:

> Pas the falling moon of my getting
> and falling on torch the moon of my yr bearthing I gone to the hart
> of the wud I gone to the stoen wood in the hart of the stoap I gone to the woom of her what
> her her woom in Combry.

There is e great deal of this and, although a spiritual quest may involve wrestling with "nuances of meaning", the repetitious circling becomes increasingly indulgent and out of control.

When Riddley returns to the plane of action it is as an artist, a showman whose puppets, like the novelist's, are both his mouthpieces and the material of his continuing quest: "Why is Punch crooked? Why wil he always kil the hobby if ho can?" Most futuristic novelists provide allegories for today's society and some add metaphysics to their metaphors, presenting themselves as interpreters and prophets. Russell Hoban has such ambitions, projecting into the future a pessimistic contempt for the masses which is hardly balanced by the promise of mystic intuition for an artistic elite. The current taste for cabbalistic utterance combined with the novel's striking setting and logenious language may win this prophet followers—perhaps we shall soon all be buying maps of Inland and celebrating "Wel, ecsiter my datter!". But *Riddley Walker* is o far more effective and suggestive work when it depicts the plight of man in this world than when it attempts poetic restitutions of eternal verities.

Firsts and foremosts

By Peter Kemp

FREDERIC RAPHAEL:
Oxbridge Blues
213pp. Cepo. £5.95.
0 224 01871 X

The stories in Frederic Raphael's new collection, *Oxbridge Blues*, are all stylishly crafted and professionally polished. Unfortunately the varnish, though, there is generally a split: Raphael is a writer whose aims often go against his natural inclinations. Setting out, apparently, to satirize the smart, Raphael regularly ends up as their publicist. Sardonic appreisal softens, as his narratives unfold, into an infatuated teasing. Like most of his characters, he is highly susceptible to the allure of celebrity. Smartness constantly seduces him. He can hardly stop talking about it: in his pages, women are excitedly furnished with "smart clothes", "smart perfume" and "markedly smarter accent". Couples meet inspectably towards "the smart upper floor" of a yuppish restaurant, or exchange banter about how it is "Much smarter to finish" Proust than to start him.

Lovingly, his stories finger the insignia of chic. Pricey labels—Ferragamo, Florucci—turn up noticeably; a wen presses himself upon his "enviable He". De luxe commodities proclaiming status are strewn lavishly around. Meals seem mere designed for the display of taste then the satisfying of appetite. Wizards with a wine list pick fastidiously at early gulls' eggs and similar *bonnes bouches*. In one story a ten-year-old feud is triggered off when guests fail to turn up for *filet en croute* on the eight day: the humiliated host feels he and his wife have been made to look "completely second-class".

Up-market homes—like a "gleaming white house" on Primrose Hill that "flushed its superiority"—are a particularly favoured way of registering social *cachet*. Foreign travel comes in handy, too—especially for putting the finishing touch to elegant efforts. Raphael's lovers are rarely happier than when making for foreign parts amidst a chorus of gossip from "le tout *Homparesé*". In one story, a woman is in Viareggio with a Siamese abortionist, her husband having flown off to Corfu with the wife of a man now on Fire Island with his male lover. Globe-trotting of a more cultivated kind also gets appreciative mention—searching for Seferis's birthplace in Turkish, or listening to the cello played by a disciple of Casals on a private yacht anchored off Santorini.

Culture, for Raphael, is the lost word in status symbols. One man writes a novel "to put a quality hurdle" on his public image. Others strive to serve up *mots* so dry and glinting as the Chablis they are sipping. There is a perpetual dread of intellectually losing caste: "one of them secretly feared he admired the other more than the other one admired him". Intelligence is almost totally directed towards the procuring of social acclaim.

Fame is the ultimate accolade; notoriety, on acceptable second-best. There is envious gossiping about a man lucky enough to have a baby-sitter who "got his name in the paper". Starting an affair with a critic he has seen on television, a men finds himself "charged with excitement" at the thought that she "had been with three or four of the smartest men in town".

Smartness, of course, too be intellectual as well as social. And in Oxbridge, for Raphael, the two aspects intersect icresistibly. One of the stories shows a man watching enthralled as his sister-in-law seductively entangles her image. This involves not only slipping into an Israeli leather suit but also acquiring a First in Mods. As he prepares to sleep with her, he remarks that the affair is "strictly constitutional in you getting a First in your Schools". His wife, it has earlier emerged, although "the star of her Oxford year" failed to get a good degree and "turned out not really to be first class".

"First class" men and women pack Raphael's stories: academic high-fliers appear everywhere—except in academic life. Even so unlikely a candidate as a producer of films like *Rendy Rides Again* turns out to have "won the top prize for Latin verse composition in Italy in 1938". Coming out on top and scoring points are the chief preoccupations of Raphael's characters. Most of them are marked for life by Varsity experiences. Publishing a book, for them, is like submitting an examination paper—one critic gives a writer "only beta query plus" in a review. Conversations become nervily exhilaratistic vives: "I am the Pythian priestess", announces one of these intellectuals, ". . . priestesses don't come pythier than I am, or more pithod."

Raphael himself, though capable of a nice lion in quiet irony—"He was cautious, but he was careful not to show it"—often performs similarly. The stories are full of processed phrases crudely advertising their own cleverness. And there is a noticeable tendency to fall back on the same formula: "No one knew anybody quite like the Smiths, and the Smiths knew it", "if he knew a lot of things, one of them was not to be a knowall", "He had nothing to worry about, and it worried him".

Raphael's best stories are ones where he moves outside Oxbridge and its metropolitan *purlieus*. He has a good eye for place—a Spanish town, for instance, where "The bull-ring was the colour of old bread; the doorways and woodwork crusty with burnt sienna." And his two funniest pieces pin down aspects of America with consummately sharp attentiveness. All too often, though, he harks back to his favourite theme—and *Oxbridge Blues* becomes Varsity Drag.

The hiding places of power

By Anthony Thwaite

SEAMUS HEANEY:
Preoccupations
Selected Prose 1968-1978
224pp. Faber. £7.95.
0 571 11638 8
Selected Poems 1965-1975
136pp. Faber £3.95 (paperback £1.95).
0 571 11644 2

Poets who aren't habituated (by academic circumstance or the lash of earning a living by using their literary wits) to the writing of critical prose may, when they put their hand to it, justify the action in various ways: doing a fellow poet a good turn, showing they can write better than the habitués of Academe or Grub Street, sharing an enthusiasm. This last is the most usual, and has of course a respectable ancestry in T. S. Eliot, who managed to combine careful and rigorous meditations on Middleton, Massinger, Marston, Marvell, etc with creating the taste by which he himself was and is enjoyed. Philip Larkin, more narrowly and more openly, has done much the same thing with his comments over the years on Hardy and Betjeman. Ted Hughes has, a shade more grandly and cryptically, paid his homage to Shakespeare, Emily Dickinson, Vasko Popa. In all these, enthusiasms have been seen to be both shaping spirits and personal exemplars.

Now Seamus Heaney has collected together some of the prose he has written for various occasions during the years 1968-78. For much of that time, between resigning from a lectureship at Queen's, Belfast, and taking up his present job at a college in Dublin, he was indeed a freelance, living in a cottage in Co Wicklow (the setting of many of the poems in *Field Work*), "uncushioned", as he has put it, "by the routine—and salary—of a teaching position". This uncushioned move, Heaney writes in the foreword to *Preoccupations*, was a sign of his determination

> to put the practice of poetry more deliberately at the centre of my life. It was a kind of test.
>
> All that I really know about the art was derived from whatever poetry I had written, and from those poets who had helped me to write it. I had a half-clarified desire to come to poetic terms with myself by considering the example of others, and to try to bring into focus the little I knew. So when my freelance activities inevitably led to lecturing and reviewing, the focusing began on that occasional basis. But I hope it is clear that the essays selected here are held together by searches for answers to central preoccupying questions: how should a poet properly live and write? What is his relationship to be to his own voice, his own place, his literary heritage and his contemporary world?

The first six pieces in the book, all quite short, form an untitled section on their own, though three are headed "Mossbawn" and three "Belfast". They are all, in the best sense, self-centred—informal circumstantial sketches of his upbringing in Co Derry, his childhood reading and absorption of "rhymes", his literary apprenticeship as an undergraduate at Queen's (including a handsome tribute to that "agent of change", Philip Hobsbaum, who managed a flying transplant of the 1960s "Group" from London to Belfast), and a laconic Christmas 1971 message from the battlefront.

The sixth of these pieces, written in 1972, is really a bridge into the main body of the book: a debate with himself about the "voice", or the two voices, of his poetry—"I suppose the feminine element for me involves the matter of Ireland, and the masculine strain is drawn from the involvement with English literature . . . I began as a poet when my roots were crossed with my reading". All this is expanded and given considerable underpinning in a lecture he gave two years later to the Royal Society of Literature, "Feeling into Words", which takes as its starting point those lines in *The Prelude* where Wordsworth says

> The hiding places of my power
> Seem open; I approach; and then they close;
> I see by glimpses now; when age comes on,
> May scarcely see at all, and I would give,
> While yet we may, as far as words can give,
> A substance and a life to what I feel:
> I would enshrine the spirit of the past
> For future restoration.

"Poetry as revelation of the self to the self" is Heaney's gloss on the process described there by Wordsworth, and also an account of his own processes, which he concentrates into the single metaphor "digging"—the title, in fact, of an early Heaney poem which ("almost proverbial common sense", he says) equates the spade with the pen: the first poem in his first book, *Death of a Naturalist* (1966), and the first poem of his new *Selected Poems*.

One of Heaney's considerable gifts in these prose pieces is that he keeps a proper—and not mock-modest—commonsensical balance, whether he is talking about himself or other poets. He doesn't want to

> overload "Digging" with too much significance. It is a big coarse-grained navvy of a poem, but it is interesting as an example—and not just as an example of what one reviewer called "mud-caked fingers in Russell Square . . .".

Indeed, Clive James's hilarious peat-clubbed lines from the work of "Seamus Feamus" (in *Peregrine Prykke's Pilgrimage*) succeeded because they push the acceptable manner of the original into the unacceptable mannerisms they might have become:

> White spoors of cackle plumb
> Tight mounds brine-splashed with gnat-frost. Fuddled, numb,
> I slop the dunt melt of the scurfing hog's
> Black molars to the shred-hung mandrake . . .

The ludicrous denseness cackled at there is a kind of penumbra round certain early Heaney poems: to adapt Yeats on Housman, a mile further and all had been bog.

It was in his third, at the time oddly unsatisfying book *Wintering Out* (1972) that Heaney began to break away from the bogs, bulls and buckets that had come to seem a winsomely dandified way of dealing with "the matter of Ireland". His reading of the Danish archaeologist P. V. Glob's *The Bog People* helped the break, and the considerable power of what he came across there is filled out in some detail in the "Feeling into Words" lecture I mentioned earlier. The bogs, now, were to be turned into something other than topographical features of childhood, accompaniments of other nostalgically recalled days behind the plough and peering down wells—the sort of thing that made me say, on another occasion, that the appeal of Seamus Heaney was something like that of Laurie Lee: not cider with Rosie, exactly, but tatties with Paddy, a clear pathway onto urbanized British O-level syllabuses. The bogs instead became the repository of ancient rituals, ancient cruelties, "in the long rites of Irish political and religious struggles".

Alongside these creative revelations, put to good use by Heaney in such poems as "The Tollund Man" (from *Wintering Out*, and included in these *Selected Poems*), run the excavations and reflections of many of these prose pieces—"the relationship between the almost physiological operations of a poet composing and the music of the finished poem". The refinement and extension of Heaney's art, which reached its striven-for level in *North* (1975), goes hand-in-glove with his strong but delicate handling of other men's flowers. In *Preoccupations*, lectures and reviews show a generosity of spirit, and an acuteness of mind, which can see the best in such different recent poets as Ted Hughes, Geoffrey Hill, Philip Larkin, Theodore Roethke, Hugh MacDiarmid, Stevie Smith, Robert Lowell; among the Irish, Patrick Kavanagh, John Hewitt, John Montague, Paul Muldoon—as well as, presidingly and almost forbiddingly, Yeats; which can find as much nourishment, unobviously, in Wordsworth as in, obviously, Hopkins. In all these plumbings in prose, what is felt for is the nerve of the rhythm, the energy of the word, which, together, reach what Eliot (cited in Heaney's lecture on Hopkins, "The Fire i' the Flint") called "the auditory imagination". This is explained by Heaney as "that feeling for word and syllable reaching down below the ordinary levels of language, uniting the primitive and civilized associations words have accrued".

Although, on the face of it, many of the preoccupations of Heaney's prose may seem to be personal and/or Irish (and perhaps there is no need for the "and/or"), the most impressive single piece in the book is a long lecture called "Englands of the Mind", which takes three poets who "treat England as a region—or rather treat their region as England—in different and complementary ways": Hughes, Hill, and Larkin. Heaney's sensitive and sympathetic discussion of these three concentrates on their speech, their special language, in a way that has eluded most of their explicators and standardbearers, who prefer on the whole to make gestures towards their supposed vatic truths and paraphrasable philosophies. What Heaney establishes is the way in which "their three separate voices are guaranteed by three separate foundations which, when combined, represent almost the total resources of the English language itself", and how these draw on distinct landscapes: Hughes's "northern deposits, the pagan Anglo-Saxon and Norse elements", Hill's "Anglo-Romanesque, touched by the polysyllabic light of Christianity but possessed by darker energies which might be acknowledged as barbaric", and Larkin's broader-based tones, "mannerly but not exquisite, well-bred but not mealy-mouthed", which can range from what Heaney hears as the late-medieval cadences of *Everyman* and Skelton (in Larkin's "Money" and "Self's the Man") to the Cavalier, the late Augustan, the Tennysonian, the Hardyesque, and even the Imagist (in "Going"). This essay is an altogether masterly analysis, precise in its convictions, of a kind that only a poet could achieve and only a specially gifted poet could communicate so effortlessly and scrupulously.

Not that Heaney's mind lacks edges in its genial response to what it confronts. Writing about the *Penguin Book of English Pastoral Verse*, an interesting but highly tendentious anthology, he observes of the editors' approach that "The Marxist broom sweeps the poetic enterprise clean of those somewhat hedonistic impulses towards the satisfactions of aural and formal play out of which poems arise". Granting Hugh MacDiarmid what over compliments can be granted him, he succinctly characterises what can't. "If Burns and Dunbar are tributaries in the stream of Lallans, the portentous and absurd shadow of William McGonagall sometimes haunts MacDiarmid's English. The epic voice goes epileptic. . . . In attempting a poetry of ideas MacDiarmid can write like a lunatic lexicographer". Heaney can even be reluctantly critical of his admired Robert Lowell (a considerable influence on several of Heaney's most recent poems, not included in the *Selected*) when he looks at *Notebook* and some of its progeny.

Taken together (and taking the unrepresented *Field Work* into account too), these *Selected Poems* and *Preoccupations* show Heaney as all of a piece, a man in whom technique and craft (he makes his distinction between them in "Feeling into Words") have made a happy marriage. If he was overpraised for his early poems, as I think he was, he is now in danger of being cut down to size by those repelled by the lumbering tread of the symbolic exegetes and the over-attention of the elephantine misreaders. But he seems to me a man who knows his own mind and will not easily be deflected. If, though now "cushioned" again in a teaching job, he chooses to go on dealing in prose with writers whose work engages him, I would like to see him write at length about Shakespeare, about Hardy, about Emily Dickinson, about Louis MacNeice: there is evidence in *Preoccupations* to show the result would be worth reading.

Wisdom and small beer

By Robert B. Martin

RICHARD LITTLE PURDY and MICHAEL MILLGATE [Editors]:
The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy
Volume two 1893-1901.
309pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £17.50.
0 19 812619 0.

"The longer I live the more does B.'s character seem *the* literary puzzle of the nineteenth century" wrote Thomas Hardy in perplexity over Browning. "How could smug Christian optimism worthy of a dissenting grocer find a place inside a man who was so vast a seer and feeler when on neutral ground?" He admired Tennyson as a great artist but dismissed him as "a mere Philistine of a thinker". On the basis of these letters, it is even harder to find unity in the conflicting aspects of Hardy himself, and by comparison to him Tennyson comes to seem a profound intellectual. It is tempting to believe that there was one Hardy who grieved over the mindless capriciousness animating the universe; who out of compassion created Tess, Michael Henchard, and Jude; who reacted in horror to cruelty to animals; and who wrote those great tender lyrics about humans stretching out tentative fingers to each other and frustratingly failing to touch. Then there was a desiccated little man with the same name who put on a droopy false moustache to impersonate the artist as he sat at his desk and perfunctorily thanked a procession of dim correspondents for "the enclosed", nigglingly questioned royalties, sent snobbish little chronicles of small beer in genteel *clichés* to his Group of Noble Dames, and archly made suggestions about the ladies' own literary attempts.

The two distinguished editors of Hardy's correspondence admitted ruefully in the preface to the first volume that the early letters were thin in quantity and quality but assured us that things would soon pick up. Since they would presumably not waste their time on the seven promised volumes unless the project was worth the candle, we must believe them, but at the end of the present volume, when Hardy has reached the age of sixty-one, the reader is still waiting.

In these letters there is less genuine emotion about persons or ideas than about the bicycle Hardy bought in his late fifties, a free-wheeling Rover Cob, "the loveliest 'Byke'", for which he paid £20 and about which he wrote with the affection most persons reserve for their newest child, telling of his spins all over the southern counties, togged out like a superannuated Mr Polly in cycling gloves and a waterproof cape too short to cover his knickerbockers. Surprising, but not the first thing we want to know of a writer.

There is no reason to judge Hardy's letters by the standards we apply to those of Keats or Byron or, indeed, those of Swinburne, Carlyle, or Virginia Woolf, since their letters are often minor works of art in themselves, equal (and in the case of the last three, arguably superior) to their more formal writing. Nor do Hardy's letters proceed from bursting, vital exuberance like those of Dickens, whose expansiveness was too much for his novels and spilled over into his correspondence. Hardy was additionally hampered by his obsession with concealing his origins, which always cramped any spontaneity in writing of himself. Still, we might reasonably hope to find in his letters something of his aesthetics, but he was disappointingly chary of theory and laconic in writing of it, and his feelings about his works are seldom revealed except in yelps of pain at unfavourable criticism. It is as if he had totally written himself out by the end of a poem or novel and no longer needed to explore its ideas or emotions, leaving nothing to ponder, let alone write about. Of "Drummer Hodge" he says only, "The thought it embodies is a mere passing one of no profundity, but it happens to be curiously apposite to the moment".

The slightest fragment about great writers is surely worth preserving, but it is hard to know what to make public, what to record for decent burial in a library or other archive. The decision is particularly difficult with Hardy, whose correspondence so often consists of snippets. One letter in this volume reads in its entirety, "Sent on", and another, "Received. Many thanks." Perhaps future critics or biographers will find significance in these scraps, but the heart of the general reader scarcely skips a beat at them.

As one would expect from the first volume, the editing by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate is immaculate, although in their admirable wish to clarify they are sometimes over-generous. In a short letter they date Tuesday, January 17 1893, Hardy wrote that "We were snowed up Saturday and Sunday, but are released again by the thaw", to which the annotation adds: "contemporary records show that it snowed heavily on Saturday and Sunday 14 and 15 Jan 1893 but that a rapid thaw set in on Tuesday 17 January." One hopes that the next five volumes will give the editors more to get their teeth into.

But they may not, for of course, the history of Hardy's correspondence is one of the systematic destruction of evidence about his life. During his first marriage Emma Hardy, in one of their emotional crises, burned his love letters, then demanded her own back and destroyed them as well (his remaining letters to Emma are heavily concerned with hats, cats, and hotel prices). At the end of his life, when he had finished writing the autobiography that later appeared under his second wife's name, he destroyed the originals of the diaries, notebooks and letters he had consulted, so that there would be no proof of the discrepancies between the official life and the facts. After his death the bonfires in the garden of Max Gate were rekindled and many of the remaining letters disappeared. The understandable assumption has always been that what went up in smoke was uncomfortably revealing. In the nature of things, however, most of the letters flung onto the flames, aside from those written to his wives, were the ones that Hardy had received, not those he had sent. It would be a peculiarly Hardyesque irony if the surviving letters were in fact the most intimate and absorbing he ever wrote.

The first volume of a projected three-volume study, *The Anglo-Irish Novel*, by John Cronin (157pp. Belfast: Appletree Press. £6.95. 0 904651 33 9) contains chapters on seven novels which "illustrate the distinctive characteristics and the remarkable range of fiction in the nineteenth century": Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent*, John Banim's *The Nowlans*, Gerald Griffin's *The Collegians*, William Carleton's *The Black Prophet*, Charles Kickham's *Knocknagow*, George Moore's *A Drama in Muslin*, and *The Real Charlotte* by Somerville and Ross. The author notes in his introduction that the works he has chosen for analysis "could be said to fall roughly into the two categories which Yeats identified . . . what he called 'two different accents, the accent of the gentry and the less polished accent of the peasantry and those close to them'". The essays reveal the ways in which the novels both throw light on their period and are to a great extent, once again in Yeats's phrase, "'Ireland talking to herself'". There is a select bibliography of material for further reading.

A wit in his context

By Auberon Waugh

ALAN BELL:
Sydney Smith
A Biography
250pp. Oxford University Press.
£9.95.
0 19 812050 8

It must be almost impossible to write a dull book about Sydney Smith and anyone who, on first looking into Alan Bell's new biography, is tempted to say that Mr Bell has achieved the impossible should be sternly corrected. It is not dull. It is scholarly, which is not the same thing at all. Mr Bell has spent the past ten years of his life preparing a definitive, four-volume edition of Smith's letters, which will burst upon us in due course. As a result of his labours, he tells us, he has found some two thousand unpublished letters to supplement the thousand odd we already have, and although sceptics may ask whether our knowledge of a letter-writer is likely to increase in arithmetical proportion to the number of letters, Mr Bell has reason to be proud of his industry, to hail each new insight, rejoice in every error corrected and to laugh, even with immoderate glee, at any new jokes which turn up.

In fact, nearly all the best jokes in the book are already familiar. Most of them, through his daughter Saba's *Memoir* of 1855 and her selection of his letters, and through Hesketh Pearson's admirable popular biography of 1934, *The Smith of Smiths* (still in print from the Folio Society), are already in the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, with much else that Mr Bell has not found room for. But then it can be pointed out that as long ago as 1865 there was already a book on sale—I have never seen it—called *The Wit and Wisdom of Sydney Smith*. The purpose of a new biography is not simply to find new *gags*, new epigrams, although no doubt Mr Bell's gigantic collection of letters will prove a mine. His purpose, so far as one can see, is to provide as accurate a summary of the life as possible, and to place Smith within the context of the social and political history of his time.

Mr Bell, in other words, does not belong to the creative school of biographers. His intentions are directly opposed to those of Hesketh Pearson, whose larger than life portrait of a genial, good-hearted parson, who lived for laughter and the love of friends, might have been built up from little more than a few selections out of *Wit and Wisdom*, a paraphrase of Lady Holland's *Memoir* and a gallop through the 1839 four-volume edition of his *Works*. Mr Pearson ends his book with an impressive bibliography, but I do not believe he read half of it. *The Smith of Smiths* is certainly the best introduction to Sydney Smith, and I shall always be grateful to Hesketh Pearson for having introduced me to the genial soul he created by the force of his powerful imagination and modern mind on a few yellowing texts. But having read Mr Bell's more austere biography, and most particularly having read the portraits of Hesketh Pearson in Malcolm Muggeridge's memoir and in Richard Ingrams's study (*God's Apology*, 1977), I am forced to the reluctant conclusion that Pearson was largely re-creating Sydney Smith in his own image.

Hesketh's Sydney is essentially a funny man, revelling in good company and the fugitive art of conversation. Food and drink were a major part of the joy of life, and while his emotions were generously involved—always on the right side—in most of the political issues of the day, he never seriously expected that his writings or his speeches would influence events, and never took politics very seriously. Was it not Sydney who wrote in a letter to Murray, "Tory and Whig in turns shall be my host,/I taste no politics in boil'd and roast."?

What a pleasant contrast, one might suppose, to the fanatics of today, and how nice to have known Mr Smith. The picture changes somewhat if it appears that he was a serious glutton, in the precarious position of having to please a number of rich patrons, some Whig and some Tory, in order to satisfy his appetite for boiled and roast; yet the ambivalence is certainly there. Let us examine his attitude to the Game Laws. The long campaign he waged against them in the *Edinburgh Review* is best summed up by a sentence from his Reform Bill speech: "For every ten pheasants which fluttered in the wood, one English peasant was rotting in gaol." One must add that he was also particularly lenient towards any poacher who appeared before him on the Bench in Yorkshire.

A little earlier, after Sydney had been presented with the additional living of Londesborough by his very good friend the Duke of Devonshire, he wrote to Lady Carlisle: "Pray tell the Duke that it is not my fault if there are so many poachers in Londesborough. I have preached several sermons about the Birds in the Air and the Beasts of the Field, stating that they all belong to His Grace. I shall be under the painful necessity of mentioning the pheasants by name. I have no doubt, however, that with three or four sermons I can disperse the whole gang."

Eight years earlier, he made his attitude even clearer in a letter to Lord Carlisle, who had quizzed him about his articles on the Game Laws in the *Edinburgh Review*:

> Your attack upon me is a very fair one. It never occurred to me in indicating the rights of humanity that my neighbours might be so literal as not to send me game. What a rash man I have been! Had I not better publish an advertisement stating that I never meant to push matters to such a disagreeable extremity, that I was only theorizing and never intended to proceed to practical abstinence from such delicacies? . . . Thank you for the game, at whatever expenditure of human life obtained.

A portrait of Sydney Smith by Henry Perronet Briggs, 1840.

Jocularly put, but in any conflict between his appetite for social justice and his appetite at the dinner table, it would seem the dinner table came first. Yet he was extravagantly generous with anything he had.

Readers will notice that I have assumed they know who Sydney Smith was (a Whig divine, polemical journalist and wit) and roughly when he lived (1771-1845). If I am right, and if nearly all literate people know about him, this is mainly because enough people have read Pearson's biography for word to have got around. But it must also be because of the image created by Pearson's book—he is certainly not guilty of the mistake himself—that nearly every person with whom I have discussed Sydney Smith (and as I live in his village, he crops up in conversation quite often) has supposed that Sydney was speaking of himself when he described someone's idea of heaven as "eating pâté de foie gras to the sound of trumpets". Hesketh Pearson's great hero in life was Falstaff, and one sees again and again that he has tended to clothe Sydney in the genial robes of sweet Jack Falstaff rather than look too closely at an insecure cleric, jockeying for preferment, underneath. If Mr Bell's account gives almost too much emphasis to this aspect of his life, with a long description of family squabbles over money and endless references to his efforts—however charming and diffident—to secure advancement, neither of the two portraits is very easy to reconcile with another portrait which survives. John Sparrow has argued in his *Independent Essays* (1963) that Sydney was almost certainly the model for Henry Tilney, the young lover of *Northanger Abbey*, memorable for the "fluency and spirit" of his discourse and the "archness and pleasantry in his manner". Mr Bell is hesitant about accepting the attribution as proven, but it is surely too agreeable an idea to sacrifice on the altar of pedantry. If the chief fault in Mr Bell's book is a slight tendency to attach greater importance to new material than its novelty alone justifies—hence the unfortunate emphasis on family squabbles, preferment and the more serious aspects of Sydney's journalism—and the overriding fault in Mr Pearson's book is to ignore the more austere side, then Jane Austen can surely be called in for a putative third opinion.

Sydney's origins, described by Mr Bell as "obscure, though they are neither mean nor discreditable", were quite unlike Mr Tilney's in that there was no mouldering family seat in the background. In fact Robert Smith, an eccentric businessman of extraordinary meanness, bought, ruined and then sold some twenty houses, ending his days modestly in Bishops Lydeard, a Somerset village only a few miles from Combe Florey, where Sydney was to move as Rector two years later. It was his father's meanness which drove him into the Church—his own preference was for the law.

I have never been able to decide in my own mind the extent to which Sydney Smith actually believed in God. From the weight of his letters which have already appeared, it would not seem that religious faith was an important influence in his life—certainly not to be compared with belief in toleration or the Whig concept of social justice. Under Mr Pearson's dispensation, any tendency to religious scepticism would appear an amiable trait but Mr Bell, in his concern to defend Sydney against such a charge emanating from the "ignorant or the prejudiced", only succeeds in raising the suspicion that Sydney may have been even more of a time-server than one had at first supposed. It was obvious enough that with the background of the *Edinburgh Review* and Holland House, Sydney should be concerned to dissociate himself from any atheistic or revolutionary taint. His prospects of a bishopric, already threatened by the Peter Plymley letters and his championship of Catholic emancipation, could scarcely survive any open avowal of atheism. But in quoting from Sydney's Introductory Lecture to the Royal Institution (1804)—"All these things Moral Philosophy observes, and, observing, adores the Being from whence they proceed"—and in pointing out that this passage is not added to give a religious gloss to a secular text, but forms an integral part of it, Mr Bell merely increases the suspicion in my mind that Sydney may not have been so much a civilized sceptic as a double-dyed dissembler.

At least one can absolve him of any revolutionary or socialistic sympathies. He was never under any illusions about the depravity of the lower orders. In his first curacy, at Netheravon on Salisbury Plain—about which he said "Nothing can equal the profound, the unmeasurable, the awful dullness of this place in which I lie dead and buried, in hopes of a joyful resurrection . . ."—he wrote of the poor of his parish that they were "weak, witless people, totally wretched without sense to extricate themselves from their wretchedness". He wrote to Sir Robert Peel that the sentence of transportation was so lenient as to constitute an incentive to crime. In a later letter he proposed the *treadmill* as a more suitable punishment: "The punishment would be economical, certain, well administered, little liable to abuse . . . affecting the imagination only with horror and disgust, and affording great ease to the Government." There is no irony in this. Sydney intended it as a serious suggestion.

Reading between the lines of his letters at the time, one receives the impression that his wife, Catharine Pybus, was a lady of exceptional ugliness. Complaining of his father's aversion to her, he wrote: "I know you think Miss Pybus's person very disagreeable, but this consideration is so entirely confined to opinion, and the evil (if it exists) is so exclusively my own, that I am sure you will not give me unprovoked pain by commenting on the subject. Her fortune is, I believe, £8,000 Sterling." To his friend J. G. Clarke he wrote: "As for the lady, she is three years younger than me, a very old friend of mine—a good figure and to *me* an interesting countenance . . ." (his emphasis).

Among other achievements, Mr Bell makes a case for suggesting that it was Sydney's denunciation of the abuse, neglect and vice within public schools—based on his own unhappy experiences at Winchester—which prompted the public school reforms after 1860; and that he was father of the abusive political satire—not to mention abusive book reviewing—which still flourishes to this day in Greek Street and elsewhere.

But no fresh insight or fresh emphasis can seriously alter the Sydney Smith we knew and love, if only from the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. It was Combe Florey, where the reviewer lives, that prompted him to describe the country as a "healthy grave". His epigram that "A joke goes a long way in the country. I have known one last pretty well for seven years" is borne out by the fact that people still chuckle down here about his habit of tying oranges to his bay tree, in order to impress visitors with the mildness of the climate, and antlers to the heads of his donkeys in the garden, in order to mock his neighbours' passion for deer parks. Combe Florey has not changed much—"the people are civil (very civil), drunken, wretched and degraded". He wrote to George Tierney in 1829: "This is the most beautiful country in England . . . everybody is drunk from the first of January to the last of December—in every other respect it is enchanting."

Sydney Smith's rectory is now occupied by a charming and hospitable retired airline pilot. No doubt Sydney would have approved, with his enthusiasm for the railway. Nothing very much has changed, as I say, in Combe Florey, and I can't really see that Sydney Smith has changed very much, despite all Mr Bell's exertions. His scholarly and painstaking book is probably best seen as an extended introduction to the promised four-volume collection of Letters.

POSTAGE: INLAND 16½p ABROAD 24p

SECOND-CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, NY. PRICE $1.25. SUBSCRIBERS US (BY AIR FREIGHT) $60.00 YEARLY. TIMES NEWSPAPERS OF GREAT BRITAIN INC. 201 EAST 42ND STREET, NEW YORK, NY 1017.

A modern Oliver

By George Theiner

SAMUEL PISAR:
Of Blood and Hope
316pp. Cassell. £7.95.
0 304 30737 8

In the summer of 1975 Samuel Pisar was asked by President Giscard d'Estaing to accompany him on a pilgrimage to Auschwitz. There is a picture in *Of Blood and Hope* showing him, elegant and attentive, his beautiful wife at his side, on his listena to the speeches by the French President and the then Polish leader, Edward Gierek. He was only forty-six years old, yet already he had a long and distinguished career behind him: a graduate of Melbourne University, with a law degree from Harvard and another from the Sorbonne, and a member of Gray's Inn, he had worked for the United States Administration under John Kennedy as well as for Unesco, had set up a highly successful international law practice specializing in Hollywood stars and large business concerns, and had played an important part in shaping America's policy of détente and economic cooperation with the Soviet Union. Five years previously he had published his first book, *Coexistence and Commerce*, which was received, as he puts it, "with astonishing acclaim".

A success story by any standards, even if Pisar had been born of well-to-do parents and had experienced a happy, uneventful childhood and adolescence. The circumstances under which he actually grew up, and his later reincarnation, make this an extraordinary tale indeed.

Samuel—or Mula, as he was known to family and friends—was born in the Polish town of Bialystok, where his father started the first taxi service "with one Renault and one Chevrolet". He was a family of some standing, owning several houses, and it was proud of Leon, the grandfather, who had saved many Jews in the bloody pogrom of 1906 "when the city was still a part of the czarist empire". Being themselves Jewish, the Pisars were destined for annihilation. In 1939 Poland was invaded by Hitler's forces from the West and Stalin's from the East. Bialystok becoming part of the Soviet zone. For two years the family's fate was deferred; the Red Army happened to encounter Mula's father with his hands black with grease, as he was just mending a car, and he was thus taken for a member of the proletariat and left in peace. The impressionable ten-year-old fell victim to "the poisonous seeds of Stalinist indoctrination", and, to the consternation of his father, even dreamt of becoming a Red Air Force general. His more pragmatic mother wanted the family to follow her two brothers who had emigrated to Australia, or to go to the United States where they had other relatives. It was not to be.

The Nazi attack troops that entered Bialystok wasted no time in implementing the Führer's racial plans. On the first Friday of the occupation, over a thousand Jews were herded into the Great Synagogue, which was then set afame. The following Sabbath, hundreds of able-bodied men, among them my cousins Isaac, Gelsha and Frol, were rounded up, lined up in a field, and cut down by machine-gun fire.

That, writes Pisar, laconically, was the beginning. What follows is an all-too-familiar description of the horrors of ghetto and concentration camp, of cattle-truck transports and gas chambers, as the Jewish boy from Bialystok finds himself alone in a hostile world in which, to use the author's words, the unthinkable had become possible. While they are still in the ghetto in the slums of their native city, his father is caught by the Germans trying to help children escape to freedom and is shot for his pains. When the time comes for the dreaded transport, his mother makes Mula put on long pants—he thus goes with the men, never to see her again. She, his little sister Frieda, and his grandmother perish in the holocaust.

Pisar brings to his story a narrative skill and a sharpness of intellect which lifts the book above the general run of concentration-camp literature. He constantly switches from the appalling reality of the Nazi camps in the post-war years and to the present, reminding us time and again that Stalin's gulag was an equally monstrous invention and that, unlike Hitler's, his heirs are still with us.

Young Mula survived his gruesome journey through the hell of Auschwitz, Mauthausen and Dachau, learning to use his wits and striking up a life-long friendship with his "camp brothers" Ben and Nikn, that heroic "wild Dutchman" from Rotterdam, before being liberated by a black GI in a tank on whose turret was painted a five-pointed white star instead of the hateful swastika. At the age of sixteen he was, by his own account and as a glance at his photograph confirm, a tough, hard-eyed "modern Oliver Twist", well versed in the rules of survival, and able to play his part in the sunny shady black market deals which soon landed him in trouble with the American army authorities. Saved from the career of a juvenile delinquent by the well-nigh miraculous intervention of his young Parisian aunt, he is redeemed by the further kindnesses of his two Australian uncles, who provide him with a loving home and a good education, and set him on the road to America.

All this kindness seems to have rubbed off on his recipient. The reader would be hard put to it to find an unkind reference to any of the huge cast of characters who pass through the pages of this book—always excepting the brutal SS guards and the likes of Hitler, Stalin, Brezhnev and Idi Amin. Even those whom he does not see eye to eye with, such as Henry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezinski (at Harvard, Professor Harold Berman had called them "Poles apart") or Solzhenitsyn, are given fair treatment by the author, who continues to admiring the first and last-named despite considerable differences of opinion.

So much then in praise. What of criticism? That détente, trade relations and coexistence are good and (given the nuclear capability of the two superpowers) necessary things I have no doubt. Yet it does on occasion seem to me that Pisar is too willing to conceale advantages of trade and technical know-how in the Soviet Union without adequate guarantees of something in return—such as improved Soviet performance in the sphere of human rights. And there seems to be an inconsistency between his statement (during an official visit to Kiev where he was making his moving and courageous but to visit Babi Yar) that "if I were in Russia attempt to commandeer an airplane, in order to flee from your country, they should be brought to justice, because you have broken the law" and the incident appraisal with which he concludes the courageous exploits of a young Frenchwoman who carried out "a commando raid in a bombers through Greek and Turkish centers" in order to snatch Mikis Theodorakis and her two children from under the noses of the Greek Colonels after Pisar and others had successfully pleaded with them to save the life of the composer from Theodorakis. "When civilized and diplomatic methods fail", Pisar writes, "one has to fall back on primitive instincts and actions even man in authentic resistance fighters". If that is so, I fail to understand why Edward Kennedy and his friends should be treated as common criminals.

But I must not end on a discordant note. All in all, this story of one man's moral and spiritual redemption makes inspiring reading.

Repairing the damage

By J. F. Watkins

JOSEP TRUETA:
Surgeon in War and Peace
The Memoirs of Josep Trueta, MD, FRCS, DSc
Translated by Amelia and Michael Strubell
288pp. Gollancz. £9.95.
0 575 02780 0

LAWRENCE SHAINBERG:
Brain Surgeon
276pp. Secker and Warburg. £7.95.
0 436 45200 6

Josep Trueta (1897-1977) was an orthopaedic surgeon in Barcelona until the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War revolutionized his life. Had it not been for those upheavals he would, in all probability, have led a life of locally distinguished obscurity, working hard, making money, and publishing occasional unlikely interesting papers to do with his speciality. German bombs on Barcelona throw large numbers of severely wounded people into his care and propelled him on to a larger stage. He developed a form of management of limb injuries (basically, removal of dead tissue and immobilization of the limb by a plaster cast) which was strictly inappropriate for the larger, brutality which shortly followed, and saved thousands of lives.

Trueta was not a political man, but he was warned that he could nevertheless expect to be slaughtered shortly after the entry of Franco's troops into Barcelona. He therefore fled to France with his family, penniless, his career in ruins, but with one highly peculiar qualification—he was the only surgeon in the world, of his standing, who had direct experience of the consequences for flesh and bone of aerial bombardment of large industrial cities.

He and his wife were whisked in London for a few days so that he could be questioned by the authorities, who were, it seems, planning for 100,000 casualties a day from air-raids. He told them that with so high a casualty rate the war would end in four days, and predicted a maximum of 10,000 casualties a day. Of course he was not believed, and, of course, the highest number of casualties in one day in the London Blitz was 9,250.

The few days of his visit stretched into twenty-six years. Gladstone, Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery in Oxford, took him to that city, found him an income and (with Florey's help) a place to work in. He became an experimental pathologist, making a discovery, of Nobel prize quality, about the circulation of blood in the kidney, wrote a small classic, *The Spirit of Confronia*, and in 1949 succeeded Girdlestone as Nuffield Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery. Among his intimate friends were Salvador de Madariaga and Pablo Casals. When he retired in 1965 and returned to Spain the only British accolade he took with him was an honorary D Sc of Oxford University. He was perhaps too modest a man to remark on this characteristically English snub. The French, on the other hand, made him a Chevalier of the Légion d'Honneur, and than promoted him to Officier. Pompidou, then Prime Minister, replaced the ribbon with the rosette at a dinner-party in Paris given by Baron de Rothschild.

This autobiography was put together by one of his daughters and her husband from Trueta's reflections. He hoped that the book would be of interest at least to his grandchildren. The style is plain, simply recording the events of his life in succession, with asides on Catalan nationalism and on various friends and enemies. He courteously, but unemotionally, does not give the names of the nastier characters who came his way. The absence of literary artifice makes it very likely that the decent, kind, clever, slightly stubborn, philosophically resigned character who emerges from the book is an accurate picture of Trueta himself, a man shepherding his family through terrible times, perhaps at the end, just a little bemused by his survival and success.

From one eminent surgeon to another, of a violently different kind. Trueta comes across as real, but occasionally dull, while the other is never dull, but may not be wholly real. The author of *Brain Surgeon*, a New York novelist, spent a year dogging the footsteps of the pseudonymous Dr Brockmen, a world-famous neurosurgeon working in a world-famous American hospital, and wrote this book about what he saw. The result is a work structured like a novel. The protagonist, Brockmen, is a chain-smoking, foul-mouthed, tough, humane, sixty-three year old midget who is also a brilliant neurosurgeon, with a frankly sexual attitude to his surgical exploits: "the man who says he isn't turned on by surgery is either a liar or a eunuch". For his assistant, Alumni, the "whole process becomes religious. It's like you're left the human realm entirely".

For his other assistant, Henry Richmond, neurosurgery is "similar to LSD or mescaline". These are the principal good guys; the bad guys are cerebral tumours attacking and distorting the lives and minds of innocent ordinary people. Day in, day out, the battle rages. Sometimes the good guys win, sometimes the bad guys.

Interwoven with this account of this unending war we have the novelist's preoccupation with the obsession in time and the interactions of the personalities of his characters. Tension is produced by presenting, at an early stage, half-a-dozen or so cerebral tumour patients and follow their progress until, in the last chapter, their fates are disclosed. One patient is presented in greater depth than the others, and the apogee of the book is a superb description of his operation for meningioma, in which all the characters are brought together in the operating theatre to be brilliantly observed by the novelist's eye of Lawrence Shainberg. Shainberg inserts himself into the pattern of the book with accounts of his own reactions to the events around him and tentative, futile speculations about the nature of mind.

The result of all this is the first example of a new literary genre, part documentary, part biography, part novel, in which we can never distinguish the objective truth from the writer's decoration of the fact. Did Brockman, for example, really "explore eye contact" with the attractive wife of one of his patients, or was he simply looking sympathetic? Does he, at sixty-three, really start every day by running two miles, doing fifty press-ups and skipping for ten minutes, or was this an invention of the writer, inserted to emphasize the larger-than-life quality of the character? There is also a trace of Zen mysticism in the book, fortunately very much under control. It emerges to the occasional meaningless quotation, "Form is emptiness. Emptiness is form", but is not intrusive to the extent that the work could be retitled "Zen and the Art of Brain Maintenance". Because of its richness, and the view it gives of contemporary American attitudes and modes of thought, *Brain Surgeon* will become a classic.

Opening the heart

By Patricia Craig

The Journals of Anaïs Nin
Volume 7, 1966-1974
Edited by Gunther Stuhlmann
416pp. 16 pages of illustrations.
Peter Owen. £9.95.
0 206 0568 7

Meeting Lawrence Durrell for the first time in a number of years, Anaïs Nin is struck by a certain coldness of spirit in the better-known writer: "He talks to me unmusing, not out of feeling." This is the opposite of Miss Nin's own literary manner. Her Journals will certainly amuse no one (or only by inadvertence); and an excess of feeling oozes from every heartfelt comment: "I felt enmeshed by my own responsiveness"; "They came with gifts made with their own hands, and we express tenderness and love." Of a piece of criticism which has pleased her, Miss Nin observes: "It opens the very heart of the world." We can understand her enthusiasm; she goes for the messy and throbbing herself.

Before the publication of the first volume of her Diaries in 1966, Anaïs Nin was known only as the friend of Henry Miller and Lawrence Durrell, and the author of a number of sensitive and poetic novels. She suffered, of course—how could she not?—when her own sensitive and poetic personality was exposed to public scrutiny in the Diaries, but gained every solution from the heartening response which followed. Women all over the world were touched, moved, enthralled. In the seventh and final volume, five pages of excerpts from letters received by Miss Nin show the general reaction. "I turn into the Diary for beautiful my life"; "your writing reaches deep inside of me"; "Through your words . . . I have come upon the thresholds of my soul". Did all this gratify Miss Nin's vanity? Not a bit of it. There was no one in the Diary, there was only a voice which spoke for thousands, made links, bonds, friendships. There was no one self. We were all one", she assures her readers. In this disingenuous? I think so. In the sense not intended by Audon, she became her admirers. She sees herself as "a symbol of integrity and independence".

Occasionally, a natural resentment breaks through: "people only bring me their burdens". But the mission to beautify and strengthen American (female) lives keeps the exalted advice columnist going. She "utterly exhausts" herself in the service of one tiresome woman who has sent to Nin's publisher a cable bearing the dramatic message: "Please tell Anaïs Nin I am going to commit suicide" (some and address included). Anyone who has read as far as p. 211 (where this incident is recounted) will know that a warm and tender friendship is about to "flower". Nin playfully calls the hysterical author of the telegram, "my suicide".

What is offered by Anaïs Nin is an antidote to the harshness and brutality of contemporary life, which denies the spiritual feelings and destroys intuition? Beside, the insight that "liberation comes from within", a deep faith in psychoanalysis until an awareness of the power of dreams. She is sometimes lucid. It is no wonder that militant feminists, "man-hating" or not, and political women lose patience with her passionate but vague exhortations. Reckling is sometimes heard in her lectures. "Dreams are healing", shouts one rude member of a university audience. During a strike, hungrier, Nin's dreams, which she dutifully records, are almost hideously revealing. In nightmares she performs domestic chores, on her knees frantically scrubbing and cleaning. On one occasion, in her sleep, she is transported to the top of a waterfall where she stands with D. H. Lawrence washing her flutterley swift beneath. The setting is desolate. Not a flicker of humour gets into the description of this absurd set-piece.

Swimming, as everyone knows, is a metaphor for sexual intercourse, another subject on which Miss Nin is infallible. For physiological details she not always accurate. In Volume 1 she gives the impression that vaginal copulation involves semen floating (swimming again). As an activist she is no more persuasive than her friend Henry Miller, but for opposite reasons. If Miller puts off the activity by the roughness of his approach ("lavatory writing" was the term Lawrence Durrell applied to his work), Miss Nin makes it seem intolerably tireless ("a dissolving luminosity" is one of her expressions). It takes place at an elevated plane where "mutual bearing", and "cold-bearing" are mysteriously equated. Female orgasms, indeed, have a special significance for this most feminine of writers. Also in Bali makes her feel of "an aesthetic and beautiful womb". And to indicate the state of harmony achieved during a week-end with some poetic young people she writes, "We gave birth to each other". Mawkishness can go no further.

Nin never hesitates to utter a truism: "the reading of books is in itself the most beautiful education of all". For literary critics, affirmation is to affirm, affirm, affirm. Anything destructive shocks and hurts her: "War, bombs, assassinations, holdups, crimes . . . sad, so sad. It is a fatal revulsion, sentimentally expressed. One effect of her florid prose is to make you resist all her recommendations and ideas, even when they have a core of common sense. She is at her best as a travel writer. Journal 7 begins in Japan and ends in Bali, jotting down her impressions quickly, without too much refinement or pretentiousness. But the greater part of the book is given over to meetings with admirers, the conflict between the public and the private self, and other banal events, inflated. When Anaïs Nin notes "the salient quality of the atmosphere was simplicity", the feeling comes up accidentally the genuine discharged by her book. It is of course, like the sincerity of the emotional preacher or the exuberant television compère, a target commodity.

Between eros and thanatos

By Phyllis Grosskurth

NIGEL NICOLSON and JOANNE TRAUTMANN (Editors):
Leave the Letters Till We're Dead
The Letters of Virginia Woolf
Volume VI: 1936-1941
556pp. Hogarth Press. £15.
0 7012 0470 2

The publication of the sixth and final volume of Virginia Woolf's letters almost brings to completion the mausoleum erected to her memory by vigilant relatives, who have presided over the Family Romance through the ownership of the copyright of her letters, the publication of her biography, and through successive editions of her writings.

The cult that has grown around Virginia Woolf would be slightly comic were it not for her suicide. She is no longer a foolish woman, but a complex image constructed of woman, writer, suicide—an objectified symbol of our death instinct. The quality of her work has been confused with a deeply neurotic, rather frightening human being. Throughout these volumes we have witnessed the spectacle of an ego held in precarious balance between eros and thanatos, a spectacle which appeals to morbid voyeurism. That final act might have been catharsis were it not for some grave problems raised by Nigel Nicolson in an appendix to this last volume.

Here he queries the assertions of both Leonard Woolf and Quentin Bell that Virginia Woolf's three suicide notes, one addressed to Vanessa, the other two to Leonard, were written on the same day, March 28, 1941. Nicolson argues the case that her suicide might have been premeditated by ten days, and suggests that the three letters were written on March 18, 23, and 28 respectively. His argument is plausible, although he admits that the contention "that the three letters were all written on the day of her suicide, cannot be conclusively disproved". His unexhausted pose questions of rather disturbing proportions. A letter considered by Quentin Bell to be the last of the three notes, Nicolson, and his co-editor, Joanne Trautmann, believe to be the first; it is dated simply Tuesday, but his editors believe it to have been written on the 18th rather than on the 28th March.

Two reasons are given for their conclusion. First, they consider the strong possibility that Virginia Woolf attempted to commit suicide on the earlier date and had written to Leonard prior to this. It was written on the same stationery as the letter to Vanessa, dated Tuesday, which they interpret as March 23, a date evinced from the first sentence, "You cant think how much I loved your letter", apparently referring to a letter from Vanessa of March 20. Both these notes were folded and put in blue envelopes.

The undated letter, however, was written on slightly smaller paper and was unfolded. The ink and the penmanship were identical, although on the undated letter the ink starts paler, as if it were running dry and had to be replenished halfway through". These were the two letters supposedly found in the house. The undated letter was left unfolded and unsealed in the garden hut. What evidence has Nicolson about the precise spot where the notes were found? And all by Leonard? Leonard, however, meticulous only one in *The Journey Not the Arrival Matters*. The mystery deepens. Furthermore, Nicolson does not tackle the thorny question of the contents of the letters. Each of the three attests to Leonard's total devotion, as if written in absolution of all guilt and responsibility that might be attributed to him.

In the Tuesday letter (dated 18 March, 1941, by the editors), Virginia writes: "You have been saintly patient with me and incredibly good. I want to say that—everybody knows it, etc, etc." To Vanessa she wrote: "All I want to say is that Leonard has been so astonishingly good, every day always; I can't imagine that anyone could have done more for me than he has. We have been perfectly happy until the past few weeks, when this horror began. Will you assure him of this?" In her last letter to Leonard, the one which is specifically dated 28 March, 1941, she again assured him, "All I want to say is that until this disease came on we were perfectly happy. It was all due to you. No one could have been as good as you have been, from the very first day until now. Everyone knows that". Why did Quentin Bell not quote both letters in his biography? Surely it is the responsibility of a biographer to consider all the essential evidence. A reader might reasonably wonder, in view of this oversight, how many other letters have possibly been suppressed? Once started, the process of suspicion accelerates. Why, for example, does he say "Virginia wrote one of the gayest and one of the most hilarious of her letters to Vanessa at the height of the Munich crisis. Unfortunately it is not a letter which can, at present, be published"? Why, then, this tantalizing hint?

The final paragraph of Nicolson's introduction in which he discusses Virginia's suicide deserves to be quoted in full:

> Was this insanity? No, it was a combination of fantasy and fear. She would have recovered as she had before. She was not mad when she died. When Leonard visited her garden-hut that final morning, March 28, 1941, he saw nothing in her behaviour to make him hesitate to leave her alone. Her handwriting, even of her last note, was firm and normal. But she feared madness, and the fear of it was enough to justify the Coroner's verdict, in the kindly formula of his profession, that she killed herself "while the balance of her mind was disturbed", but no meant by it more than the facts prove. Her suicide, as Susan Kenney has suggested in her careful analysis (*University of Toronto Quarterly*, Summer 1975), was her "last desperate act of free will". Many people who take their own lives do not choose to die, but are impelled to it by their mental illness. Virginia Woolf chose to die. It was not an insane or impulsive act, but premeditated. She died courageously on her own terms.

The editing of the Woolf letters has been meticulous, but perhaps the packaging has been a little too glossy. It is a startling oversight that Nicolson makes no reference to Roger Poole's important book, *The Unknown Virginia Woolf* (1978), which also argues the case for Virginia Woolf's sanity at the time of her death. Nicolson describes Susan Kenney's article as "a careful analysis". It is certainly that, but it is also brilliant and courageous. Kenney is not going to have any truck with sycophantic fantasy, and her forthright argument is in marked contrast to Nicolson's evasive references to her analysis of Virginia's death.

She argues that while the Ouse was flooded and icy cold, it would have been difficult to drown in it. Though the river was dragged for several days, her body could not be found; it was thought to have been carried out to sea. Rumours circulated in the village that Leonard Woolf had done away with her and hidden the body, but these were stifled some weeks later when her body was found, badly decomposed, floating in the same spot where her hat and stick had been. Apparently it had all the time been wedged in some underwater debris. The coroner's verdict was suicide while the balance of her mind was disturbed. Leonard, one would think, would have been highly apprehensive on March 18 when she returned from a walk "soaking wet, looking ill and shaken", but he makes a single terse entry in his diary that she seems "unwell". According to the account in his autobiography, he was in the garden on the morning of the 28th and assumed that Virginia was in the house. At one o'clock he went in to lunch and found the two dated suicide notes to Vanessa and himself on the mantelpiece.

He searched for some time, he says, and then informed the police. In the official search, how thoroughly was the river dragged? If it was thought that the body had been washed out to sea, where did the draggers commence the search? At whose direction? The Ouse is a tidal river, but not fast flowing. How could her body have been wedged in some underwater debris? It would surely have required some very heavy rocks to have held it down, until it was found three weeks later floating like a decomposed Ophelia. Further: if Leonard was such a beloved figure in the village of Rodmell as he implies in that curious, tortuous account, "Virginia's Death", why would anyone even suspect that he had done away with his wife as Kenney states they did? In fact, how does she know there was such gossip? A statement like that is irresponsible if not backed up with solid evidence. Kenney's suspicions seem to have been aroused mainly because she finds the ending of the posthumously published *Between the Acts* so positive that she does not believe that Virginia could actually have intended suicide. What she does not consider is Leonard's brief mention of Virginia's death amid pages devoted to the persecution of the Jews and nostalgic memories of Cambridge friends, and the questionable choice of photographs, not one of which is of Virginia Woolf. Above all, there is the curious section about his own tireless compassion when forced to drown some doy-old puppies when he was a boy:

> I put one of them in the bucket of water, and instantly an extraordinary, a terrible thing happened. This blind, amorphous thing began to fight desperately for its life, struggling, beating the water with its paws.

Leonard does not see any connection between this incident and his wife's tragedy; yet he manages to relate it to what generations of Gentiles have done to the Jews.

There is no note of real tenderness in those suicide notes nor in Leonard's account of his relationship with Virginia. Most of the discussion of her and her work is concentrated on detailed charts of sales figures. True, there are the books, and the bedsock for dinner, and glorious holidays. Much as she longed to join Vanessa in Cassis in October 1936, Virginia had to refuse because "the fact is we are so unhappy apart that I cant come. Think the worse fate to imagine—that marriage, as I suddenly far the first time realised walking in the Square, reduces one to demonstrable servility". Does this necessarily indicate touching devotion? A woman with an adder's tongue was hardly likely to ignore her husband.

A close examination of Virginia's suicide, as related by Leonard, reveals some interesting glimpses into Leonard's mind, if not those of Virginia. In a discussion of Vita Sackville West's arrogance, he says that if Vita's ancestor, Thomas Sackville, was driving from Knole to Penshurst four hundred years ago, he "would not have taken either Virginia or my ancestors with him, for Virginia's ancestors were labouring as little better than serfs in Aberdeenshire and mine were living despised and rejected in some continental ghetto". What right, then, had she to sneer at his *déclassé* Semitic origins? Leonard's novel, *The Wise Virgins*, written in 1912, is an open wound of sensibilities offended by a group's inherent arrogance. Virginia was widely known for her provocative antisemitic statements and she didn't hide her contempt for her mother-in-law. Bell's soothingly opines, "Mrs Woolf had to be entertained, and then Leonard, as though his family were not affliction enough . . .". Poor put-upon Virginia, in her craving for affection, was pleased, nevertheless, when she was told that she was the favourite daughter-in-law.

Death, Leonard says, was never far from Virginia's mind. He treats this obsession almost as a form of self-indulgence, whereas "In nearly two thousand years of persecution and the ghettoes of Europe the Jews have learnt that it is a full-time job to fight or evade life's inevitable evils, the wise man does not worry over the inevitable". He quotes unpleasant extracts from Virginia's diary, as though to underline her total narcissistic self-absorption when confronted with the suffering of others:

> March 24 (1941)
>
> She had a nose like the Duke of Wellington, and great horse teeth and cold prominent eyes. When we came in she was sitting perched on a three-cornered chair with knitting in her hands. An several nurses and mount an immediate 24-hour watch to force upon her the same treatment. Both he and the doctor he consulted miscalculated the extent of Virginia Woolf's desperation, and for this Leonard took the blame, but oddly enough refused the guilt. He says in his last volume of autobiography that he felt no guilt over failure because he always thought it would be the inevitable conclusion of their life together.

With dazzling tenacity Kenney rigorously pursues the Catch-22 of Leonard's reasoning. The assumption is that if you commit suicide you must be crazy, because if you weren't crazy you wouldn't commit suicide. Kenney agrees with Nicolson and with Poole that Virginia was of same mind when she slipped into that icy water.

"When did the laughter end and the darkness begin?" Quentin Bell asks. Both Virginia's and Leonard's hysteria could plausibly be traced to the gestation of *The Years* in 1936. Leonard was obsessed with stories and photographs of the persecution of the Jews. In Virginia's despair over the difficulties she was encountering with the novel, she wrote to Ethel Smyth: "I have to consider the appalling nuisance I am to Leonard—angal that he is." "Leonard's angelic qualities", writes Quentin Bell, "were soon to be tested." (Is there an ironical emphasis on "angelic"?) According to Bell, "It had been decided that *The Years* should be put into galley before Leonard was asked to read it. This was something new and the reasons for it are not clear; perhaps she was afraid of what he might say and wanted to defer the evil moment for as long as possible." Why does Bell say that this reasons are "not clear" when in Downhill All *the Way* Leonard asserts that she insisted on galleys rather than page proofs so that she could still make revisions in the manuscript? Or any alternatives

that Leonard wanted? This is Bell's account of the crucial incident:

Leonard began to read. He read in silence. Leonard's silences could be pretty frightening, and certainly Virginia was frightened; as he read on she fell into a kind of feverish dove, a sort of miserable half-sleep. Meanwhile Leonard was feeling both disappointed and relieved. The book was a failure—but it was not so disastrous a failure as Virginia supposed. It would therefore be possible to tell a lie; if he told her the truth he had very little doubt that she would kill herself. Suddenly he put down the proof and said, "I think it's extraordinarily good".

How does Bell know with such certainty the precise nature of Leonard's reaction? Because Leonard told him so? Such credulity seems somewhat simple-minded. What was it that Virginia feared so much about Leonard's reaction? I suggest that the clue lies in page 366 of the novel:

They listened to the water running. The man was coughing and clearing his throat as he sponged. "Who is this Jew?" he asked. "Ahrnhamson, in the tallow trade", she said.

They listened.

"Engaged to a pretty girl in a tailor's shop", she added.

They could hear the sounds through the thin walls very distinctly.

He was snorting as he sponged himself.

"But he leaves hair in the bath", she concluded.

North felt a shudder run through him. Hairs in food, hairs in basins. Other people's hairs made him feel physically sick.

"D'you share a bath with him?" he asked.

She nodded.

He made a noise like "Pah!"

"'Pah.' That's what I said", she laughed. "'Pah!'—and when I went into the bathroom on a cold winter's morning — Pah! — she threw her hand out—Pah!"

On the next page, Sara reverts to the theme of the disgusting Jew:

"...'Must I join your conspiracy? Stain the hand, the unstained hand', he could see her hand gleam as she waved it in the half-light of the sittingroom, "—and sign on, and serve a master; all because of a Jew in my bath, all because of a Jew?'"

Then again on the following page, she gnaws obsessively at the same theme:

"There was a humming and a grinding. The great machines went round; and little boys popped in with elongated sheets; black sheets; smudged; dumped with printer's ink. 'Pardon me a moment', he said, and made a note in the margin. But the Jew's in my bath, I said—the Jew . . . the Jew. . . ."

In Virginia describing her own grievance against The Hogarth Press? Bell says that "for Virginia it was inconvenient and worse than inconvenient. . . Kept here in London when she should have been in the country; it obliged her to read manuscripts when she should have been writing them. It was a worry, a distraction, it had been a source of endless disputes between Leonard and the young men whom he had brought in as apprentice managers, and because it was emotionally important to him, it was a source of agitation to her". As far as Leonard was concerned, in Virginia's books The Hogarth Press "had an enormous potential asset; they were the economic rock upon which in the twenties the economic fortunes of The Hogarth Press were probably based". After the publication of *The Years*, Virginia recorded in her diary: "I can feel a little proud that I have faced the music; we have sold 5,000 copies before publication: that we shall get some money; that I'm doing my share, and not merely subsiding into terrified silence." Quentin Bell takes Michael Holroyd to task for suggesting that "When the Germans bombed London, she [Virginia] calculated the serious damage in terms of decreased book sales". It is understandable why Holroyd came to this conclusion after reading the following entry in her diary for August 23, 1940: "Bank flopped. Sales dawn to 15 a day since air raid on London. Is that the reason? Will it pick up?"

The scene of Virginia watching Leonard as he read the passage about the Jew could be a tableau from Strindberg. No wonder she was frightened. How could he ever forgive her for this most devastating of humiliations? How would he retaliate? Was all the secret over *The Years* partially due to the pressure Leonard exerted on her? A mouth after publication, she wrote to Ethel Smyth: "I loatha it and see a sweat stain, a tear stain, a gash—200 pages cut—on every existing page". But those pages about the disgusting Jew were not gashed.

Shortly after the publication of the book in March 1937, a Jewish reporter from the *New York Times* tried to intrude into the Woolfs' house in Tavistock Square. Virginia's reaction was "odd", as Quentin Bell uses frequently about her; and in an appendix he quotes her "almost hysterical outburst of half-rhymed prose". The fury, the nastiness, the vindictive cruelty make it almost unbearable to read.

There he sat on the chair with his hair unbrushed; his mouth dribbling; his eyes streaming with the steam of some lodging house stew. A bug; Always on the wall. The bug of the house that comes. But if you kill bugs they leave marks on the wall. Just as the bug's body *bleeds in pale ink* recording his impressions of a private haunt.

It she possibly telescoping Leonard, the brash reporter, and the bedbugs Kingsley Martin who sucked every drop of lifeblood and left his great purple vampire body" (Butter to Ethel Smyth, June 9, 1940)?

All the evidence suggests that after the artistic failure of *The Years* Leonard made a concerted attempt to undermine Virginia's confidence in herself. The confusion in her mind and the confusion about her writing is reflected in her attempts to work at the same time on the biography of Roger Fry, *Three Guineas*, and the novel that would be published ultimately as *Between the Acts*. In *Three Guineas* she poured her hatred of a male-dominated world in which "educated men's daughters" have £100 in all bestowed on their education, a world in which men have the power to wreak havoc. But Leonard was "oppressed by the weight of its facts and arguments" Was Virginia becoming a financial liability? In 1937 the *New Republic* turned down her essay on Gibbon, while her thirty years' connection with *The Times Literary Supplement* was broken off. No longer could Leonard say, "You're wanted by the Major Journal". He told her not in honour over the tedious Roger. "Didn't Leonard say there's no hurry? Except that I'm 56; and think that Gibbon then allowed himself 12 years, and died instantly."

As year lengthened, she reflected, "I don't feel that the crisis is real —not so real as Roger in 1910 at Gordon Square, during which I've just been writing—(I'm thinking not of Hitler—how I bless Roger and wish I could tell him so, for giving me himself to think of—what a help he reminds in this welter of unreality)". While running a temperature, she was given a severe lecture from Leonard when she was only half-way through the book. Virginia suspected that his motives were not altogether objective, for to her Roger was "for the most 'exciting' person to meet I've ever known" (letter to Philip Hughes, January 18, 1941).

After the rise of Hitler the Woolfs persistently discussed various means of committing suicide. Drowning always appealed most to Virginia who in her description makes it sound like a black orgasm. Leonard knew that "a wrong word, a mere hint of pressure, even a statement of truth might be enough to drive her over the verge into suicide". God knows there were enough scales to be picked off—Vita's new lover, Vanessa's fecundity, Virginia's versorized dependency on Leonard when he developed genuine trouble, her anxiety over money, the deaths of those dear to her, and the disintegration of a precious entity called Bloomsbury, which she defended like a raging tigress.

Susan Kenney is intrigued by the three alternative endings to *Between the Acts*. In the first version, Virginia Woolf seems uncertain how to bring the novel to a close after the end of the pageant. In the second, Isa turns to Giles and says, "So we're alone at last". The final version reads:

Left alone for the first time this day, they were silent. Alone, enmity was lured; also love. Before they slept they must fight; after they had fought, they would embrace. From the embrace another life might be born. But first they must fight, as a bird fights with the vixen, in the heart of darkness, in the fields of night.

Isa let her sewing drop. The great bended chairs had become enormous. And Giles too. And Isa against the window. The window was all sky without colour. The house had lost its shelter. It was night before roads were made, or houses. It was the night that dwellers in caves had watched from some high places among rocks.

Then the curtain rose. They spoke.

Roger Poole belongs to the school which sees the novel as immersed in darkness. Susan Kenney, however, interprets the ending as a statement that "life continues where art leaves off and vice versa". Does it? "They spoke". Speech was the only form of communication between those two beings locked in eternal warfare.

Phenomenal showmen

By John Sturrock

THOMAS A. SEBEOK and JEAN UMIKER-SEBEOK:
"You Know My Method".
A juxtaposition of Charles S. Peirce and Sherlock Holmes
84pp. Bloomington, Indiana: Gesflight Publications.
0 934468 01 X

The subject of this learned small essay in semiotics is guessing, as practised by two formidable guessers, the Pragmatist philosopher C. S. Peirce and Sherlock Holmes. The more formidable of the two was Peirce, "Mathematician, astronomer, chemist, geodesist, surveyor, cartographer metrologist, spectroscopist, engineer, inventor; psychologist, philologist, lexicographer, historian of science, mathematical economist, lifelong student of medicine; book reviewer, dramatist, actor, short story writer; phenomenologist, semiotician, logician, rhetorician, metaphysician . . ." as Max H. Fisch reverently characterizes him in a preface. Peirce called guessing "obduction", or sometimes "retroduction", and numbered it among the innate, biological faculties shared by humans and animals. We abduct by instinct; that is, we pass intuitively from percepts to a hypothesis explaining those percepts, and generally to a right hypothesis. Our success in guesswork Peirce put down to a pre-established harmony between nature and the human mind.

The Sebeoks begin their enjoyable little book with a splendid anecdote, of an occasion when Peirce engaged one on actual piece of detection, or applied semiosis. In 1879 his watch and overcoat were stolen from his cabin on a Fall River steamer. The angry and enterprising Pragmatist at once took the law into his own hands: he fleeced the suspects up on the deck and interrogated them in a deliberately oblique and *dégagé* manner in the hope that the culprit would betray himself. He did, although Peirce could (or would) not say what the tell-tale sign was which gave him away. Peirce put his coat and timepiece back, his patented method of abduction having proved far more precise than the routine police work of the Pinkerton men also called in to investigate the theft.

The abductive method is carefully assimilated here to the one used by Sherlock Holmes, who also proceeds, despite his outraged protests to the contrary, by inspired guesswork and not by reason, forming hypotheses as to the habits or recent activities of those who consult him from inconspicuous signs about their person. The Sebeoks properly relate this sign-reading technique to the secular medical tradition of semeiosis, and in particular to the famous speed, skill and assurance in diagnosis of Conan Doyle's Edinburgh teacher Joseph Bell. Bell, Holmes and Peirce wore all showmen and all attest to the high prestige we gladly concede to the masters of abduction.

Own goal

By Carol Rumens

LILIAN MOHIN (Editor):
One Foot on the Mountain
An Anthology of British Feminist Poetry 1969-1979
252pp. Onlywomen Press. £2.50.
0 906500 01 X

First published in 1979 and now reprinted, this plump anthology contains 228 poems by fifty-five British feminist poets. There is Aspen Joycechild Woumn, for example, who "began as a sucker in Derby and is at present growing in Fife". According to the biographical note, Aspen (*populus tremula*) is "quite unsafe near buildings as she can cause soil shrinkage which disturbs the foundations". Few of the poems, unfortunately, are as lively as this. *One Foot on the Mountain* bears the imprint of the stereotype, albeit a feminist one. At least five different writers' groups, Lilian Mohin tells us, are represented here, but all seem to have been working in a kind of blunket Feminist Poetry Collective style, using platitudes which may be ideologically sound but are aesthetically about as interesting as the conversation at a Tupperware party. Individualism, which is taint of the hierarchy—the latter heavily, if clskily, rejected by the Women's Movement—is still, alas, the sine qua non of creative achievement.

By forretting for the most interesting work (the traditionally "good" poems like Judith Barrington's "Coming Home", for example) one is obviously missing the point: feminism was Lilian Mohin's first criterion in making her selection, but a poetry, on the lack of it, is continually deliberately conjured. It is a confused enterprise, expressed by the frankness of one of its own contributors, Lynn Alderson, when she says "I don't really think what I write is poetry—just rough craft, awareness of form, word broadness of vision, I write to explore my personal mythology . . . etc".

It certainly could be argued that the special case-pleading of a book like this is on one level profoundly anti-feminist. Women's writing is presented as something perfunctorily close to therapy, the telling of personalities fractured and battered by the world's machisme. This may have its own important place, but it has little to do with poetry. Poetry is a limited-sized job. Are women so threatened by it that they must pretend to write off the within pseudo tradition as a patriarchy, stalking out in tiny corner for themselves as if they were flat-earthers, or hollowed the world would cail at five o'clock next Friday? This unthinking would seem to foster this illusion.

"To begin to write from within the female experience is a new task" says Ms Mohin, and in some ways she is right. It is a new task, for example, to express female homosexuality in English poetry. Even W. H. Auden, confronting the male equivalent of this situation, faltered; social and linguistic conventions are dominated by old polarizations of gender and sexuality, now probably more limiting than enriching. But the problem of writing from one's own experience in a given tradition is hardly unique to women or homosexuals; it is universal. Every artist has to re-invent the public art form in relation to the private self. That pain, that excitement are what it's all about.

We are still left with a nagging question: why are there no female established women poets? It seems a more complex and interesting question than, for example, why there are not more women chessmasters or maintenance engineers. Gender conditioning looks, at least superficially, as if it should work in favour of, rather than against, women writing poetry (it is light, clean, and can easily be fitted in between making the breakfast and feeding the baby). And poetry would seem to have a more flexible career structure than most artistic professions.

Here, statistics would be useful. It would be interesting to know how many women in proportion to men want to become writers but give up, what proportion of the successful are childless, etc. One indisputable fact, however, is to hand. This is that most established male poets currently being published in this country have undergone a certain kind of education which instils, among other things, the confidence of belonging to the English literary tradition, and which includes such obvious benefits as the study of Classics at an early age and the making of useful contacts (for example, with people who have the power to publish). So there is a loose career structure even for poets. Fewer women have access to this system. Fewer still have the power to publish each other's work. Then there is the final obstacle that poetry's small and shrinking audience makes it impossible with all but the bravest entrepreneurs. Poetry today does not have "relevance" on its side for anyone.

The unpopularity of poetry is perhaps a less soluble problem than the practical difficulties that women as artists are still likely to face. There is the attachment to children and child-care, with its basis both in physiology and the expectations of society; there are the demands of domesticity, which certainly have not been banished by technological progress, in fact, many middle-class women have now become "working class" in that they spend more time dirtying their hands in their kitchen and gardens than did their ancestors in the pre-industrial era. They maybe more self-confident, more experienced than the drawing-room ladies of the past, but they have less free time.

Perhaps if more feminists get married (to men), had 2.4 children and brought them up according to their own humanist and important insights, the freedom for men and women to fulfil their potential regardless of gender would be brought within reach of a generation or two. The sillier excesses of gender stereotyping have been exposed in dozens of sane and trenchant books and articles, and still thousands of children continue to grow up bound in the pink and blue ribbons of Adam and Eve's day. Think how the human race could be transformed by, for example, a blend of daughters reared on Quentin Crisp's inspiring dictum that if you leave the house unplanned for ten years, after that it will not get any worse. Unfortunately, the Women's Movement has become increasingly separatist during the last decade. It has largely ceased to become theic Rabbi, on the world's machisme. This may have its own important place, but it has little to do with poetry. Poetry is a limited-sized job. Are women so threatened by it that they must pretend to write off the within pseudo tradition as a patriarchy, stalking out in tiny corner for themselves as if they were flat-earthers, or hollowed the world would cail at five o'clock next Friday? This unthinking would seem to foster this illusion.

"To begin to write from within the female experience is a new task" says Ms Mohin, and in some ways she is right. It is a new task, for example, to express female homosexuality in English poetry. Even W. H. Auden, confronting the male equivalent of this situation, faltered; social and linguistic conventions are dominated by old polarizations of gender and sexuality, now probably more limiting than enriching. But the problem of writing from one's own experience in a given tradition is hardly unique to women or homosexuals; it is universal. Every artist has to re-invent the public art form in relation to the private self. That pain, that excitement are what it's all about.

We are still left with a nagging question: why are there no female established women poets? It seems a more complex and interesting question than, for example, why there are not more women chessmasters or maintenance engineers. Gender conditioning looks, at least superficially, as if it should work in favour of, rather than against, women writing poetry (it is light, clean, and can easily be fitted in between making the breakfast and feeding the baby). And poetry would seem to have a more flexible career structure than most artistic professions.

Here, statistics would be useful. It would be interesting to know how many women in proportion to men want to become writers but give up, what proportion of the successful are childless, etc. One indisputable fact, however, is to hand. This is that most established male poets currently being published in this country have undergone a certain kind of education which instils, among other things, the confidence of belonging to the English literary tradition, and which includes such obvious benefits as the study of Classics at an early age and the making of useful contacts (for example, with people who have the power to publish). So there is a loose career structure even for poets. Fewer women have access to this system. Fewer still have the power to publish each other's work. Then there is the final obstacle that poetry's small and shrinking audience makes it impossible with all but the bravest entrepreneurs. Poetry today does not have "relevance" on its side for anyone.

The unpopularity of poetry is perhaps a less soluble problem than the practical difficulties that women as artists are still likely to face. There is the attachment to children and child-care, with its basis both in physiology and the expectations of society; there are the demands of domesticity, which certainly have not been banished by technological progress, in fact, many middle-class women have now become "working class" in that they spend more time dirtying their hands in their kitchen and gardens than did their ancestors in the pre-industrial era. They maybe more self-confident, more experienced than the drawing-room ladies of the past, but they have less free time.

Perhaps if more feminists get married (to men), had 2.4 children and brought them up according to their own humanist and important insights, the freedom for men and women to fulfil their potential regardless of gender would be brought within reach of a generation or two. The sillier excesses of gender stereotyping have been exposed in dozens of sane and trenchant books and articles, and still thousands of children continue to grow up bound in the pink and blue ribbons of Adam and Eve's day. Think how the human race could be transformed by, for example, a blend of daughters reared on Quentin Crisp's inspiring dictum that if you leave the house unplanned for ten years, after that it will not get any worse. Unfortunately, the Women's Movement has become increasingly separatist during the last decade. It has largely ceased to become their Rabbi, on condition that he gave up eating pork. Knowledge of their existence soon aroused great interest in Europe, mainly through the publication of Nicholas Trigault's *De Christiana Expeditione apud Sinas* (1615), one of the best-sellers of the seventeenth century in several languages.

Transmutations of sex

By G. M. Carstairs

WENDY DONIGER O'FLAHERTY:
Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts
382pp. University of Chicago Press. £21.
0 226 61849 8

The author of this erudite and interesting book has the uncommon distinction of being a scholar with a sense of humour robust enough to make fun even of her own work. She warns us in her preface: "The elation with which I wrote most of this book made me feel at the time that the material was consistently fascinating. On reading it now, I am downcast to find that certain sections of it bore me. Some of this may be attributed to the inevitable postpartum depression or to my own oversaturation with the material; but I think that some passages really are dull. I am, nevertheless, loath to omit them altogether since they contribute essential elements to a general argument that is, I think, in need of all the help it can get."

What, then, is this general argument? It is hardly claim to have made a discovery while studying a body of Sanskrit and Tamil myths in search of references to androgynes and theriomorphic women—that those Hindu texts repeatedly use "sexual metaphors and animal symbols to express religious concepts of the relationships between men and women, gods and goddesses, and humans and deities".

Before embarking on her exposition, Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty interposes a brief discussion on methodology in the study of myths. She distinguishes two kinds of methods, one a method of discovery, the other a method of validating one's hunches; and she does not conceal that the former is predominant in this book. She readily admits to emulating the Hindu capacity for simultaneously entertaining two or more mutually contradictory explanations of an obscure statement, in doing so, she repudiates single-minded reductionism in favour of interpretations which are personal, subjective and aesthetic, but still disciplined by the need to make her subjective judgments explicit and subject to challenge, or endorsement, by others. Here she takes comfort from Whitehead's defence of "speculative" as against "pragmatic" Reason: "The power of going for the penetrating idea, even if it has not yet worked into any methodology, is what constitutes the progressive force of Reason".

All this, however, is merely the prelude to six chapters which are full of interesting and often surprising references from classical Hindu texts on what seem at first sight to be somewhat disparate themes, such as "Sexual fluids in Vedic and Post-Vedic India", "Gods and Goddesses in Opposition", "Sacred Cows and Profane Mares", and a concluding long chapter on androgynes in Hindu cultures but with special reference to their significance in Hindu art and mythology.

In each of these chapters themes already stated recur, particularly the attribution of sexual significance to various bodily fluids, and the interchangeability of attributes of gods and goddesses, men and women. One cannot help noticing, however, a curious anomaly: the extreme paucity of examples in the post-Vedic and Hindu myths of the more as the female who devours her consort. This is all the more curious because of the abundance of myths involving bulls, cows and stallions. The interesting concept is offered that a mother's key function in relation to her child is to be there even in her destructive aspect. In the myths which survive, an immortal mare repeatedly flees from her mortal spouse and abandons her child to grief, emptiness and longing: the very disappearance of the mare from later myths may be a way of expressing her abandonment in contrast to the continuing presence of the ever-nurturing cow.

This may seem like heavy reading but it is saved from being so by the intrinsic interest both of the wealth of materials which O'Flaherty has collected, and of her interpretations which are no less interesting for being at times constrable. Although much of the material is abstruse and highly ambiguous, the same cannot be said of her own style. For example, in her summing up of "Moanings of the Androgyne", she writes.

The Hindu Myths assume that a man can be a woman: there is no problem about it at all. But this assumption is the source of several corollary problems: (1) A man can be a woman, but a woman cannot be a man. (2) A man can be a woman: but to create in this form is dangerous, since it is often fatal to him. (3) A man can be a woman, but this makes it difficult, if not impossible, for him to be with a woman. (4) If God is a man who is a woman, how is the worshipper to be his consort?

The discussion which follows reiterates one of the earlier themes of this book, namely the Hindu insistence on male supremacy together with the male's apparent insecurity which requires him to be repeatedly reassured of his superiority. Margaret Mead would have enjoyed these passages whose illustrations of the insecurity of males in their relations with their wives, mothers and lovers echo some of Mead's arguments in *Male and Female*. Here again, one notices the charity and forcefulness of the author's style when she is expressing herself directly, rather than translating or paraphrasing a Hindu text. To give another example:

The dominant woman is dangerous in Hindu mythology, and the dominant goddess expresses this danger in several different but closely related ways. She appears as the killer of her demon lover, beheading him in a symbolic castration; she dances on the corpse of her consort, impaling herself upon his still animate phallus.

The succeeding phrase "This is the non-maternal goddess" comes as something of an understatement, but it leads on to a shrewd discussion of the conflicting elements in Hindu male-female relationships, as those are enacted by the Gods.

One cannot in brief compass do justice to the interesting citations from Vedic texts concerning the symbolic significance of stallions and mares which have been so overshadowed by the greater ritual significance of bulls and cows. Nor can we briefly summarize the major argument, which circles back to concepts of the relationships between men and women as metaphors for the relation between God and man. It is, however, worth mentioning the concluding comments on the significance, or rather, in keeping with the author's pluralism, on the multiple meanings of the androgyne. A principal clue lies in the fact that the androgyne is always more male than female: this gives the male the upper hand in the conflict between his need for and his fear of the other. However, in typical Hindu fashion the androgyne can also be seen as a way of seeking union with God, or rather, as an array of different ways of using sexuality to this end. Here there is an antithesis between the "anti-chaos" (or Apollonian) philosophy of Vedic and Puranic Hinduism and the "pro-chaos" (or Dionysian) elements in Hindu mysticism and in bhakti. In the former, the androgyne dismembers himself and is reconstituted, as in the myths of Shiva and Devi; in the latter, the androgyne seeks union with an undifferentiated godhead. In Tantrism, on the other hand, sex itself becomes the instrument of liberation. At another philosophical level "the image of the androgyne expresses with stark simplicity the problem of how one may be separated from God when one is united with God, separation (viraha) being an essential component of love. As a theological image, therefore, the androgyne may represent either the bliss of union with God or the ironic agency of eternal longing for a deity with whom one is in fact consubstantial".

Fittingly, the book ends with a kaleidoscopic account of successive incarnations of Kali as Krishna, of Shiva as Radha (in order to enjoy intercourse in reverse), of Kali resuming her terrible form in order to kill the demon Putana—a bewildering series of transmutations of sex and sect reminding us that, in the ultimate deity, all oppositions merge. This is the culmination—though one can hardly say the conclusion—of a book which is as rich in detail as the carvings of the great Hindu temples. It shares with them a delight in the interplay of myth and mundane experience, and above all an empathy with the Hindu preoccupation with the meaning of human existence in all its complexity.

It must be said that having read this book (which the reader should take in instalments to avoid being overwhelmed by the wealth of detail) one is compelled to think again about Wendy O'Flaherty's opening remarks about methodology. Here, we have been offered her selection of excerpts of myths, from a wide reading in an enormous literature; we have also been given her interpretations, always imaginative and usually persuasive, about the significance of these myths. But does it not leave us in the end with one person's creative response to a mass of complex, often contradictory material? Its lasting merit will depend upon how many of her interpretations will receive the assent of those relatively few scholars who can match her reading in this field. Meanwhile, it offers fascinating reading to anyone who enjoys exploring some new themes in the seemingly limitless abundance of Hindu mythology.

The Jews of Kaifeng

By C. R. Boxer

JOSEPH DEHERGNE and DONALD DANIEL LESLIE (Editors):
Juifs de Chine
A travers la correspondance inédite des Jésuites du Dix-huitième siècle
250pp. Rome: Jésuit Historical Institute/Paris: Les Belles Lettres. 80fr.

MICHAEL POLLAK:
Mandarins, Jews, and Missionaries
436pp. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America. $14.95.
0 8276 0120 4

There were Jewish traders and settlers scattered in several regions of China, from the time of the Tang dynasty, if not earlier. But it was only the Kaifeng community which survived until very recent times and from its valuable records nearly all our information about Chinese Jews is derived. According to their own stone inscriptions of 1489, 1512, 1663 and 1679, the ancestors of this group arrived during the Song dynasty, probably before 1127. It is still uncertain whether they came by sea from the Yamen, or from the Gulf via India, or overland through Afghanistan and Central Asia.

The Kaifeng Jews began building a synagogue in 1163, which they rebuilt in 1279. They slowly abandoned their Persian and Hebrew surnames, taking Chinese names and titles. By 1512, the community was a flourishing one and on excellent terms with Ming officialdom, in which several Jews had obtained literary degrees and attained senior bureaucratic and military posts. In 1605, one of their Mandarin members made contact with the Jesuit, Matteo Ricci, at Peking. Two years later, Ricci was asked to become their Rabbi, on condition that he gave up eating pork. Knowledge of their existence soon aroused great interest in Europe, mainly through the publication of Nicholas Trigault's *De Christiana Expeditione apud Sinas* (1615), one of the best-sellers of

This edition of this book is lavishly illustrated with photographs of the Kaifeng Jews were in a state of abject poverty and chronic disunity. Their synagogue was in ruins, and they had no Rabbi, nor any knowledge of Hebrew. The Chinese Protestants were thus able to buy most of the remaining scrolls and other Hebrew manuscripts, which the Jesuits had vainly tried to secure over a century earlier. Many of these works are now in the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, and others are scattered in various institutional libraries.

In 1867, J. L. Liebermann, who was apparently the first Western Jew to visit Kaifeng since the Middle Ages, found only two stones inscribed in Chinese and one tablet in Hebrew, besides the fragment of a Hebrew manuscript in a local mosque. The synagogue itself had been pulled down and the stones sold by the impoverished community. Whom the Canadian Anglican Bishop White took over the site of the synagogue and the surviving memorial stones in 1912-14, the community was no longer Jewish by race, culture or religion, but its members did claim Jewish ancestry. A "Jewish Society for the Rescue of the Chinese Jews" had been belatedly formed at Shanghai in 1900; but it was dissolved after a short and rather forcical existence. Japanese observers at Kaifeng in 1940, and Western students who briefly visited the city in 1957, found a few hundred people who were dimly aware of their remote Jewish ancestry, but who no longer practised the Jewish rites and who had become totally assimilated, racially and culturally.

These two books are obviously complementary. Dehergne and Leslie's is chiefly intended for the specialist, and Michael Pollak's for a much wider public. Both can be unreservedly recommended.

Juifs de Chine is bilingual, with English translations of the relevant Jesuit letters, several of which are here printed in full for the first time. Pollak's book is much wider in scope, covering the whole history of the Chinese Jews. It is written with humour and gusto, as well as with erudition. He makes the most of the bizarre array of Western theologians, philosophers, adventurers, and "con-men", who intervened themselves in the Kaifeng Jews, from Menasseh ben Israel through Le Gobien, Leibniz, Voltaire and Kant, to the Zionist S. M. Perlmann and the crackpot Fascist-Nazi, Trolle Solvoll, author of the scurrilous diatribe *Juden in Ostasien*.

The assimilation of the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng has been an irreversible process since the early eighteenth century. Perhaps Pollak will give us a similar book on the Jews of Cochin, who are on the verge of total assimilation with their Indian neighbours, but who still have their synagogue and some of their scrolls intact.

A rival of Mesopotamia

By Norman Hammond

PAOLO MATTHIAE:
Ebla
237pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £12.95.
0 340 22974 8

Paolo Matthiae, the excavator of the important early city of Ebla in northern Syria, has had to contend with more than the usual number of problems: in addition to the accoutrements of his results by some of his colleagues he has had to endure the unsystematic speculations of the Biblical archaeologists, seeking prophets in every dig, and the unscrupulous popularizing of his material by men of less competence and conscience than himself.

This able book is his riposte: well written, full of detail for the specialist but with sufficient in the way of photos and photographs to be easily followed, *Ebla* is the best introduction to the subject we are likely to get. It is a translation of the 1977 Italian edition, but Professor Matthiae has scrupulously updated it with a new preface that brings the discoveries up to September 1979, including the extension of the late third-millennium ac Royal Palace G excavated to the south of the Ebla acropolis. The dating of the destruction of this palace, in which the famous archive of cuneiform tablets was found in 1974-75, is now firmly fixed by the recovery of several Egyptian stone vase fragments bearing pharaonic inscriptions of Chephren and Pepi I. The last, of Sixth Dynasty date, is a crucial *terminus post quem* for the destruction, which cannot have taken place before the reign of Sargon of Akkad in Mesopotamia and which was most probably executed under Narant-Sin of Akkad, i.e., after 2250 BC rather than in Sargon's reign of c 2340-2284 ac. Any Early Dynastic, pre-Sargonid date for the destruction is completely excluded.

Matthiae is at pains to refute some of the more exuberant rumours that have emerged from the Ebla discoveries: Sargon, Akkad itself and even Byblos do not appear in the cuneiform texts, and documentary evidence of any link with the events or personalities of Biblical Palestine is non-existent. None of the dramatic revelations that have been hawked around the lecture circuit has any foundation; there is no proof of the Patriarchs' existence, no news of a cult of Yahweh, no mention of Sodom or Gomorrah, and no story of the Flood.

What the work of Ebla has shown us, however, includes, as Matthiae makes clear, "a new language, a new history and a new culture": Ebla was the heart of a polity that rivalled the cities of Mesopotamia in the third and second millennia ac. Northern Syria was not a cultural backwater, but a centre of innovation, exchanging stimuli with the urban civilizations of the river lands on a basis of equality. In the late third millennium the hegemony of Ebla, as indicated by the cuneiform texts from the Royal Palace G archive, extended south to Damascus and beyond to Galilee, north to Kanesh in central Anatolia, and east to Assur on the Tigris. From the east also came the power of Akkad, that destroyed Ebla.

commentary

The art of the normal

By Frances Spalding

More than a Glance
Graves Art Gallery, Sheffield

The title of this Arts Council touring show is aptly chosen. So cool and undemonstrative is this art at first sight that the visitor could easily pass through unengaged. Nothing shouts, advertises itself or impales the eye. Harold Gilman's "The Eating House" is the only painting with strong colour, but even here the wooden partitions block from view the faces of the solitary, cloth-capped diners. Nearby are Gwen John's nuns absorbed in prayer, their backs to the spectator. On the same wall, Leonard McComb's south London terraced houses remind one of the anonymous views seen from a train window.

The show is a kind of antidote in this year's Hayward Annual. This may not have been the intention of the organizers, but the contrasts between the two are striking. The Annual was chock-full of massive abstracts, hyperactive with colour and gestural marks. This show musters the small, the monochrome and orderly. The former was selected by John Hayland; this is the result of conversations between two friends, the artist Andrew Walton and an Arts Council administrator, Michael Harrison. Their selection is intriguing. The exhibits, which span three centuries and several countries, reveal an unexpected family likeness. It is the discovery of shared concerns that sends one back to an exhibited Japanese print after looking at a Chardin Gimur, and that makes Gwen John's chair studies appear like echoes of the simple positive and negative areas of wash in a Morandi still-life.

Though only one sculptor is represented, the show has a strong sculptural appeal. Structure is repeatedly emphasized, through the manipulation of tone in Francis Towne's "Lake Come", the arrangement of figures in a William Roberts café scene, or by Kenneth Martin in his abstract permutations on the theme of order and chance. Emphasis on structure leads to considerations of balance, harmony, rhythm and combination. Emma Park's stark constructions in wood convey these qualities through the simplest of means. Elsewhere, if the images are mostly representational, these abstract qualities are still in the fire.

The results are images of stillness: moments of peace, like that which Gilman's nurse enjoys as she sits reading in the sunshine outside the contained window of her patient. Seaplanes glide silently past the window of Eric Ravilious's sickbay with its bare wooden walls, empty chair and ready-made bed. Low light adds this sensation of stillness, as it reduces contrasts, and shows our reading of the clutter in Pamela Bega's museum scenes. This little known seventeenth-century Dutch artist perfectly fulfils the demands of the organizers. He, too, disciplines the ordinary through control of tone and scale into a powerful but subtle statement. One of his pictures leans out a wooden sill, as if taking across the room to a Walker Evans photograph of a fat woman leaning against a beer iron grill.

There is a refreshing solidity to this show. Craftsmanship is the explicit subject of the illustrations to Diderot's *Encyclopédie* found here. Elsewhere we can admire the Mistress of Ince Castle's infinite variations of tone in her blue-grey wash landscapes, or Ravilious's combination of precise detail with bold effects of light. Gimner, ever in praise of thoroughness, gives us a brick-by-brick account of New End Square, Hampstead, while Constable invites us imaginatively to walk across the hull of a boat found on the beach at sunset.

Behind this unorthodox selection of work a finger points. There is a moral tone in Harrison and Walton's praise of quietness, the normal and near at hand. They refer in the catalogue to "a truthful approach to image-making", and quote Coombe as if in defiance of recent political heresies: "The great vice of the present day is *bravura*, an attempt to do something beyond the mark. Fashion always fails, and will have its day; but truth in all things only will last, and can only have claim on posterity." It is a bold stand to rediscover truth in 1980 in such images of containment, both of fact and feeling. But the result is perhaps a no-risk art that can be dealt with like a pack of cards. It excludes, for example, the gaping exhibitionism and slap-dash; and the joker has clearly been put to one side. Meanwhile we are left with a particular kind of quiet excellence, consistent, timely and welcome.

An ink and chalk drawing by Harold Gilman of his mother (c1917), from the exhibition reviewed here.

After Sheffield, *More Than a Glance* goes to the Cheltenham Art Gallery (November 8 to December 5), the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery and Museum, Swansea (December 13 to January 31), the Southampton Art Gallery (February 7 to March 4) and the Elizabethan Exhibition Gallery, Wakefield (March 14 to April 19).

Unto us a Ms is born

By Jeremy Treglown

Enjoy
Vandeville Theatre

Enjoy begine with a burst of music from the *Messiah*: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." The point it over-obviously sets up is that the play is about being a son. The specific subject is what is entailed when a son bae in the past been rejected by his father because he is homosexual, but now feels a duty to both parents in their dotage.

It is a good idea, but Alan Bennett has not this time written a good play. His treatment of homosexuality is a lamentable pop-Freud affair. The son is gay, we gather, because the father was undemonstrative in his affection for him as a child. (He made up for it with his daughter, with similarly programmatic results: she has ended up as a prostitute. Surely this must be a satire on popular social psychology? Perhaps. It seems straight in the theatre.) If only father and son could have a nice hug, everything would be all right, is the general gist, and indeed in a terrible last scene—one of several scenes you think is the last, except that this one really is—they do have a hug, the poor old man being too extensively paralysed to prevent it.

There's another one-act sized (or in this case revue-sketch sized) idea being stretched out in the play; that we live in a society which not only is perpetually under the futile scrutiny of passive observers but performs in ways *designed* to satisfy their preconceptions. This is worked out very funnily, though far too long. Almost everyone in the play is followed round by a social worker with a notebook, the old couple, Mr and Mrs Craven; a local ruffian who beats Craven up; even the neighbour, Mrs Clegg, who, called in to see whether Craven has died of the attack and deciding (mistakenly) that he has, starts so loy him out, pronouncing as she does to a number of very funny sociological clichés for the benefit of her own social worker: "So many of the fundamental expectiences hnvu passed out of our lives", and so on.

A problem in all this—and it is a problem, not (as must be intended) a *coup de théâtre*—is that the Cravens' own social worker, Ms Craig, is none other than their son in drag. Since it's evident from her first appearance that she is a man, and since it has already been made clear that the Cravens have a son who is some kind of black sheep, the connection is quickly made and some "delayed" revelations late in the play fall rather flat.

Can these two ideas, the gay son and the social workers, be united together to make more than the sum of their parts? Is this a play which sees unnatural practices as a consequence of welfare-state permissiveness? And/Or does it say that if there were less busybodies in the field, social workers would be more effective? No. Does the play, then, add anything to the two ideas, presenting us with, say, a cornucopia of deliberately bizarre, even surreal juxtapositions? Well, one man's whelk may be another man's cornucopia. And there are, it's true, some other elements: a dash of incest between the gay and the tart, a scene in which the museum Craven is dismantled and carried off with Mrs Craven in it, to become a museum of human Northern-ness. And there may be irony in what seems only inderision, between Bennett's satire on liberal conservationism on the one hand and on the other his sensitive, indeed lachrymose, exploration of the circumstances of the old couple and the mixed loyalties of the son who has gone south and done well ("I had visions of him going in university", says Mrs Craven—the play is full of good one-liners—"I could just see him in a scarf, opening a bank account").

But there aren't enough bizarreries in the play (any more than there are enough ideas), and such as there are don't approach the ferocious hilarity of the overrated Joe Orton, who is one of Bennett's models. One of the reasons they fall short is that, so far from the play's sentimentality being given an edge by its black comedy, the black comedy is vitiated by the sentiment. What is the *Messiah* chorus doing there, after all? It could be argued that it's the kind of thing the Crovens might listen to and love; that its schmaltzy thrillingness suggests the gap between their external existence and their imaginative lives, just as there is a gap between the cross-eyed, batty Mrs Craven and the songs she sings ("shaming the dum-dee lilies with a pride not golden hair"). But this isn't how it works in the theatre. The associations of the *Messiah* chorus—the son whose name shall be called wonderful, counsellor, the everlasting father, the prince of peace—are intrusively, bewilderingly irrelevant to the son whose name is Ms Craig. And like another play which began with a fragment of good music, Simon Gray's *Otherwise Engaged*, *Enjoy* leaves you longing to hear the rest. In Gray's play, that was the point. It doesn't seem to be in Bennett's.

Colin Blakeley and Joan Plowright are terrific as the Cravens (though we knew they could act, of course, and the performances deal substantially add to this knowledge). Liz Smith is successfully typecast as the social worker's dream Northern woman, Mrs Clegg. Philip Sayer makes a damp job of the damp part of the son. And there are several blandly handsome cameos, most of them recently out of drama school and some of them scions of famous theatrical families.

commentary

A prosaic transformation

By Stanley Wells

The Taming of the Shrew
BBC TV

Jonathan Miller—acting, we must hope, in defiance of his literary consultant John Wilders—offered a simplified version of *The Taming of the Shrew* in this BBC production. To omit the Christopher Sly episodes is to suppress one of Shakespeare's most valuable lesser characters, to jettison most of the play's best poetry, and to strip it of an entire dramatic dimension. In a series announcing itself as "The Complete Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare", this leaves a serious gap.

The consequent reduction of the play's imaginative complexity was reflected in a generally prosaic, literalistic mode of presentation. We opened on a stagey Italianate market place, peripheral touches of local colour being provided by a dwarf, a juggler, an apple-eater and basket-weavers. Baptista's house had lovely interiors reminiscent of Vermeer, sunlit, uncluttered rooms opening into one another through elegant arches with some ingenious mirror effects. The peaceful setting provided an ironic contrast to Kate's fits of temperament. Later, staginess returned, particularly in the closing feast, of which nothing was eaten and precious little drunk.

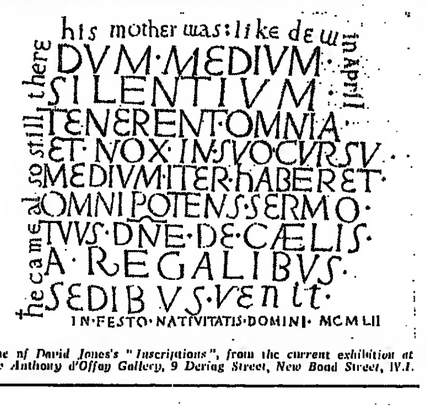
If a merit of this was to throw emphasis on the actors, Miller could not be said to have evoked a consistent acting style. Some of his performers elected for a stylized, consciously comic mode. Jonathan Cecil endowed Hortensio with a sweetly naive simple-mindedness, an eager, dim-witted charm. One of the production's few genuinely funny sequences was provided by the increasing self-absorption with which he expounded his plot to win Bianca, initially addressing himself to Petruccio but gradually losing all consciousness of his hearer, who looked on with that fascinated, if slightly abstracted, contemplation of folly of which John Cleese is a master.

As Tranio, Anthony Pedley deployed the full armoury of the farce actor, with exaggerated facial expressions and grotesque speech characteristics—dropped and misplaced aspirates, impure vowels, glottal stops, effectations of gentility. If all around him had been playing in the same mode, we might have admired; as they were not, we remained unconvinced. Actors in lesser roles descended to the kind of half-hearted improvization which may be useful in rehearsal but should be expunged in performance; "*cum privilegio ad imprimendum solum*, I'll it, eh?" said Biondello; and the Pedant added "Was that all right?" to one of his inventions.

By contrast, other performers underplayed their comedy. But the production's main strength lay, fortunately, in the leading actors. John Cleese's splendid physical presence helps him to create strong effects with little apparent effort. We saw the taming process, properly enough, through his eyes. Apart from a few necessary moments of flamboyance and a tendency to chuck amiably from time to time, it was a deeply thoughtful performance, convincing us of the seriousness of Petruccio's intentions. He clearly but unobtrusively established his strong physical attraction to Kate, and their relationship became a wholly credible process of mutual adjustment. Cleese's comic talent came into its own in the scenes following the wedding, in which he works on Kate's body, intellect, and imagination through a series of trials.

Sarah Badel, a comely, bosomy Kate, strong in physique and voice, matched him well. As their relationship developed and matured, we sensed, in her enjoyment of complicity, an inner understanding between the pair which robbed Kate's advice to the other wives of offensiveness and contributed to the deep satisfaction with which Petruccio spoke "Why, there's a wench . . ."

This was not an inventively funny production, nor a deeply imaginative one. Jonathan Miller had little success in finding the play's natural rhythms and adapting them to the small screen. He ended in anticlimax with Baptista's entire household, directed by Gremio, joining in an added pot-song. Domestic cosiness took over from the sense of wonder at a transformation miraculously achieved with which Shakespeare leaves us. Still, we had seen the transformation take place; and in this at least the production justified itself.



One of David Jones's "Inscriptions", from the current exhibition at the Anthony d'Offay Gallery, 9 Dering Street, New Bond Street, W.1.

Changing the scene

By Garry O'Connor

Our Theatre in the 80s
Cheltenham Festival of Literature

Politics, economics and size of playing-space were the dominant issues discussed by a group of critics, playwrights and directors on October 22 in a symposium at the Cheltenham Festival of Literature. Kicking off for the theatrical contingent, Michael Coveney, finding himself cast as an apostate fringe critic, inveighed against the "appalling insularity" of English theatre and the fact that fringe groups working in the 1970s had, in his view, funked the challenge of taking over "mainstream" theatre. Subsidy had extended, in Marcuse's phrase, "repressive tolerance". Coveney cited examples of French classics given imaginative treatment by avant-garde directors and lamented the lack of anything comparable in Britain.

Sue Todd at once took exception both to Coveney's view and to mainstream theatre, which she bracketed with "Hitler and Thatcher and Howe". She spoke in favour of the long rehearsal periods (a year) in communist countries and the freedom, as she saw it, of theatre workers in those countries to determine their own destiny. In the future she wanted to see a fifty-fifty participation of men and women in all theatrical enterprises.

Next the director Max Stafford-Clarke, who claimed he had "never embraced the hierarchical traditions of the English theatre", explained—to those who were not already convinced—how style of presentation arising from economic conditions, and was emphatic that the fringe should reject the larger spaces of the National and the RSC (Stafford-Clarke runs the Royal Court). He was more horrified by the twenty-two stage-hands he counted during one change of scene in *The Romans in Britain* than by the play's depiction of homosexual rape, and invoked our sympathy for the third Roman spear carrier, claiming that an actor was often "a footballl, bounced from director to director".

David Edgar delicately placed a foot in both camps and interestingly outlined the group effort they went into the creation of the RSC's *Nicholas Nickleby*, which seems in this respect to fulfil some of the ambitions Coveney has for the fringe. Edgar said that the high exchange rate of the pound, by killing foreign tourism was rapidly closing shows in London. This would have a tonic effect, enabling our theatre to rediscover some specific appeal to English audiences. He regretted a new Arts Council practice of giving money to theatres to hand on to writers, instead of giving it to the writers direct. Dramatists of his generation, he said, sped between twenty-five and forty, and broadly shocing both a pessimistic view of the future and similar social beliefs, were moving "like a barium meal through the age in which they live".

Before anyone had too long to ponder the condition of a body politic reduced to swallowing barium for its entertainment and in wonder what had happened to the cakes and ale, the discussion moved on. The large Cheltenham audience seemed well satisfied.

Mrs Q. D. Leavis gave the Cheltenham Lecture on October 23, as part of the town's Festival of Literature. F. R. Leavis gave the first such lecture; his widow is the first woman to have given it. Her subject, "The Englishness of the English Novel", was appropriately, on amplification of F. R. Leavis's book *The Great Tradition*.

Mrs Leavis argued that English literary, cultural and social experience had uniquely favoured the English novel, which she contrasted particularly with French novels. The influence of Shakespeare on the evolution of the English tradition in the eighteenth century meant that the English aimed at poetic truth to life, as opposed to Stendhal's more prosaic goal, to render the life of the streets. English Protestantism, moral and self-scrutinizing, had proved through the centuries a richer source for novelists than Continental Catholicism (and Mrs Leavis accused the English "Catholic converts", Waugh and Greene, of abjuring their responsibility, and of "spiritual pedantry"). The model provided by Richardson, the massive novel probing the assumptions of family life, proved so valuable that it was used by successive generations of novelists until our own day, when the tradition fell into the hands of inferior practitioners—Snow, Amis, Powell, Mucdoch and Fowles—writing for "comfortably placed beneficiaries of a welfare state with a rising standard of living".

Mrs Leavis elicited one protest, a strong female cry of "Rubbish" from the back of the hall, when she pronounced that the new novelists of the women's movement seemed to mark the end of the great tradition of the woman writer: at once too internationally minded and too preoccupied with their own egos, they had produced "up-to-date magazine fiction".

M.B.

Long Pause

By Jacqueline Pearson

The Nest
Sheffield Crucible Studio

F. X. Kroetz's *The Nest*, which is having its British première at Sheffield in a translation by Katharina Hehn, is advertised as a play about private and public responsibility. John, a lorry driver, dumps some poisonous waste in a tuke and his own infant son is badly burned by it. This theme, though, emerges only halfway through and we have plenty of time to reflect on what the play is really about. Is it an allegory of totalitarianism (John was only obeying orders)? Is it a plea to workers to join a union? (We are told, "In the union, you're not alone").- Is it perhaps a play about how material objects discupt relationships? The audience is certainly separated from the actors by elaborate multi-purpose boxes which open out to become now a flower-bed, now a lavatory. At times the scene-shifting takes longer than the scenes it punctuates.

John Russell Brown, the play's director, comments in the programme notes on Kroetz's willingness to break the rules about play-making. He has a point. *The Nest* is laboured and repetitive, alternating between long periods of silence and a cliché-packed prose style of unbelievable banality. As in his wordless drama *Family Favourites*, Kroetz is dealing with inarticulate characters. But, while it may be that ordinary people talk in clichés, this seems an uninteresting—not to say clichéd—point to demonstrate at such length.

When John dumps his chemical waste he comes on stage eight times to empty oil-drum after oil-drum; the night I was there, the audience groaned as he returned again and again. We may be watching a man trapped into automatism by his refusal to ask questions; we may also be seeing a playwright's contempt for his audience.

remainders

By Eric Korn

Those of my readers who were not even shortlisted for the Booker should not despair: they have not exhausted all possible sources of subsidy. Here I have two timetables of the world-wide gravy train, *Literary and Library Prizes* (tenth edition) and *Foreign Literary Prizes* (Romance *and Germanic Languages*). They come from R. R. Bowker and Co at £16.50 each, a snip when you consider that each page could repay your investment many fold—unless of course you were unlucky enough to lead the Premio Piquer of the Real Academia Espanola, which was worth 1600 pesetas at the last count and would hardly keep you in calamores, let alone clover. But here they all are, the P. C. Hooftprijs and the Count Dracula Society Awards, Dobleugsko Priser and Nit de Santa Llucia, the R. T. French Tastemaker award for influential cookbooks and the Wheatley Medal for an outstanding index.

These two indispensable guides list aims, conditions, composition of juries, recent winners, and—above all—addresses. There is some plurisaule stuff in the preface about how one might use the information herein to trace, for example, the career of John Steinbeck from California State Literature Award in 1936 to *Bestsellers* Paperback Award 1961, by way of Pulitzer and Stockholm; very useful, no doubt, but what your average reader wants is to be pointed in the direction of the crisp green folding stuff, the rhinn, meola, feic, deug or spondulicks. Which makes it the more regrettable that the editors have decided to omit "prizes that are little known or only of local importance"; no doubt they are keeping to themselves, as who would not, hot tips about obscure funds with lots of money and little competition, semi-private, soup-to-nuts like those wonderfully manipulable Oxbridge scholarships that used to be offered in the first instance to the younger sons of red-haired congregationalists from the Soke of Peterborough and, failing that, to the first person to apply when I say so—and fancy that, another of my nephews seems to have won it.

I looked in vain for an award of five million escudos for an unpublished, indeed unwritten, literary project, restricted to elderly Kentish Town beekeepers; there were instead lots of ambitious awards for the writer who—more or less—had done most to bring about the millennium. There is the Cortina *Ulisse* ("culture ought to be a common instrument of civilization and not the privilege of the few") which goes to upbeat titles like *Weil Alle Besser Leben Wollen* and Wa *Teo Cun Prosper*, the Viareggio (culture, fraternity and peace) or the Lecomte de Nouy (special concern both for the spiritual life of the age and the defence of human dignity, now discontinued).

The Christopher Book Awards seem to want it all ways: they are judged "on the bases of their affirmation of the highest values of the human spirit, artistic and technical proficiency, and a significant degree of public acceptance". They have gone in the past to such publicly-accepted affirmers as Pouillon Duraiser and Malcolm Muggeridge (twice each), Herbert Hoover and Marmor Sheehan, author of *The Spiritual Woman, Trustee of the Future*.

There are no awards, officially at least, for the writer who has done least to advance human dignity and understanding, or the author who has shown the most sustained contempt for his readers; though the French do have the Prix des Enfants Terribles which went in 1972 to Alain-Chedanne's *Shit, Man* (I wonder what they called the English translation), and we are also given a list of the recipients of the city of Hamburg's awards (1933-43) in commemoration of the death (by alcoholic poisoning, according to William Shirer) of Dietrich Eckart, the Nazi poetaster. Less odious, but none the less unattractive, sounds the Unesco International Book Award, which in 1975 went to the USSR National Committee for International Book Year for its initiative in having 1972 proclaimed as International Book Year.

Much more sympathetic are the various consolation prizes, like the $2,500 given to an English or American poet by the Friends of Russell Loines (his very name a poem), "not as a prize but as a recognition of value, preferably of value not widely recognized". I suppose on one feels—or is—recognized sufficiently, but I would not have thought of Robert Graves as obscure in 1958, nor Larkin in 1974. Similarly, the Richard and Hilda Rosenthal Foundation rewards novels that have not achieved commercial success, though some of their medallists have surely succeeded since, like *The Penthouse Fair* or *The Crying of Lot 49* or *The Assistant* (which also won Mulamud a gold medallion encased in Lucite from the National Council of Christians and Jews).

Less invidious altogether are those prizes with really precisa rubrics, like the David D. Lloyd Prize for the best book on the life of Harry Truman, or the Howard W. Blakeslee Awards for popular books about heart disease, even by *The Living River* in 1960 and *The River of Life* in 1962, and—my personal favourite—JoAnn Stichman and Jean Schneberg's *How to Survive Your Husband's Heart Attack*, a book which might be very short indeed. (Entries of four words or less, on a postcard please, to the Academy of Sciences of the Chuvash ASSR.)

There are, of course, innumerable regional awards, for writers from Freiburg and Oxford, South Carolina or North California. (There used to be one for Southern California too, but something strange seems to have happened to it. It was founded in 1973, awarded for the first time in 1975-6 to John Gilmore for *Blossom*, and than immediately discontinued.) Texas does pretty well, with a variety of goodies like the Jesse H. Jones Award and the Friends of the Dallas Public Library Award, which you must not think of as the Jesse James and the Friends of the Dallas Bank Repository. There are all those ethnic awards: the Alex Haley Foundation African Roots Award, Jewish American, Greek American, the Gadfather Award for the study of the Sicilian contribution to American culture. There are awards for the known and awards for the unknown (Great Land Writers' Conference Endowment Fund has eighteen separate funds), rewards for the young and awards for the old (Marjory Peabody Waite for continuing achievement and integrity), awards for the progressive and awards for the reactionary, like the Prix du Roman Populiste, founded as "un expression of popular reaction against surrealism and the psychological and academic novel", and then given to *La Nausée*—not the first name that comes to mind when you think about populism.

In France, of course, there are enough awards for everybody to have a couple, from the 100,000 francs of the sporadic Prix de la Nouvelle Vague to the fifty francs of the Goncourt and the two louis d'or of the Prix Voltaire (the Prix Littéraire de 500,000 Francs is actually cashless). In addition to these there are the Prix Roger Nimier ("to maintain the permanence of a state of mind and a style"), the Quai des Orfèvres prize to encourage respect for the workings of the French police, and the best foreign book prize (not a translation prize), won rather belatedly in 1949 by James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, since when it has honoured more contemporary titles like *La Saignaur des Anneaux* and *Enterre mon Coeur (à Wounded Knee)*. Tolkien, by the by, also won the Gandalf medal, which seems supererogatory, and shared the Benson Medal of the Royal Society of Literature with Rebecca West. *Prima facie*, they wouldn't seem to have a lot in common, but no doubt were able to come to some amicable arrangement about wearing it alternate weeks; more logically, Mary Shelley shared a Hugo with Mel Brooks and Gene Wilder fec *Young Frankenstein*.

A few tips for the ambitious: the most bemedalled literati, judging from the index of the British-American volume are, equal first, Robert Lowell, Richard Wilbur and Marianne Moore, so there may be some winning formula to be deduced; but poets win few pence, and it is perhaps better to go for the big nuts, which is the Premio Planeta, worth 8,000,000 pesetas unless this is a misprint. Be warned also that if you win the Gran Premio de Honor de la SADE all you get is a gold medallion of José Hernandez (and perhaps I should just mention that SADE is the Sociedad Argentina De Escritores).

Literary prizes are wholly pernicious, encouraging competition and setting man against man, nowhere more clearly than in Germany where the Bundesrepublik offers 10,000 west-marks as the Thomas Mann prize, and the DDR 15,000-east-marks for the Heinrich Mann (making an exchange rate of 1.8 Heinrics to the Thomas, but a Mann's a Mann for a' that). The one I would really like is a small replica of Charles Russell's "The Horse Wrangler" from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City, but I'll settle for the O. H. Lawrence Fellowship, to spend eight weeks on the Lawrence Ranch near Taos, New Mexico. Please consider this as an application; I'll bring my own pyjamas for the heat.

* * *

Apropos of nothing at all, a snake came in my water trough the other day. I was sitting at my typewriter staring at the roses in a deep dream of peace, when a small Indian child knocked at my door and asked if I knew I had a reptile in the garden. I explained condescendingly that he was not in the tropics now and should adjust his imagination accordingly, but he insisted I look and, sure enough, wrapped around Mrs Mulliver, or it might have been Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, was an enormous green mottled ophidian. We exchanged apprehensive looks, while sundry leaflets on the wall shouted useful advice along the lines of "look not upon the serpent lest you be bitten by a white ass". While I was hesitating about whether to phone the Zoo and admit that I could not identify it, or call the police and say yes it was one that called them last month when an unfamiliar neighbour who had just his key took a short cut through the back garden but I was only doing my duty as a concerned citizen and would they come and look at a giant tropical snake, the serpent lurched into the undergrowth and disappeared. He left me with an obscure sense that there was valuable literary material here if I could only put my finger on it: meanwhile, if anyone has mislaid a python, or a baby. . . .

* * *

I should not have said that about Sicilians. Stereotyping has not had a good press recently—someone in the *New Statesman* told quite a good and ineffensive Irish joke with the most elaborately apologetic preamble—but yes might argue that you get to know people through a series of successively refined stereotypes. The racial joke is sometimes the embodiment, sometimes the antithesis of race hatred. In the Cotswolds in the 1940s we told jokes (quite unfunny rustic jokes, come to think of it) about the village of Ebrington, where they were all mad, and I remember, before a visit there, being warned to keep a straight face and not giggle at them because they were sensitive.

* * *

"Twenty shelves, five long shelves per side, cover all the sides except two; their height, which is the distance from floor to ceiling, scarcely exceeds that of a normal beekeeper." (From J. L. Borges, *The Library of Babel*, translated by James E. Irby.)

"Twenty shelves—five long shelves per side—cover all sides except two; their height, which is that of each floor, scarcely exceeds that of an average librarian." (From J. L. Borges, *The Library of Babel*, translated by Anthony Kerrigan.)

"Twenty-five shelves, with five long shelves on each side, cover all the walls except one. They cover the wall from the floor to the ceiling and are about the height of a normal librarian." (From J. L. Borges, *The Library of Babel*, translated by C. P. Coulthard.)

Author, Author,

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than Friday, November 21. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers to be opened, or failing that the most nearly correct—in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries should be addressed to the Editor, The Times Literary Supplement, P.O. Box 7, New Printing House Square, Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8EZ, and marked "Author, Author" on the envelope. The solution and result will appear in our issue of November 28.

1 If "compression is the first grace of style",
you have it. Contractility is a virtue
as unclasty is a virtue.

2 This is the soldier home from the war.
These are the years and the walls and the door
that shut on a boy that puts the Boot
to see if the world is round or flat.
This is a Jew in a newspaper hat
that dances carefully down the narrow
walking the plank of a coffin board

with the crazy sailor
that shows his watch
that tells the time
of the wretched man
that lies in the house of Bedlam.

3 We passed the school where children played
Their lessons scarcely done;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

Result of Competition No 39
Winner: Mrs M. Bruce, 17 Lumley Road, Chester.
Answers: All very verdant—the authors' names, anyway.

1 Mr Rock rose with a groan. Crossing to the open bedroom window he shone his torch out on fog. His white head was grey, and while the reflected torch light on the thick spectacles he wore. He shone it up and down. It will be a fine day, a fine day in the end, he decided.

He looked down. He clicked his light out. He found there was just enough filtering through the mist which hung eighteen feet up and which did not descend to the ground, to make out Ted, his goose, about already, a dirty [illegible] almost the same colour as Alice's Persian cat, that kept beside him where every blade of grass was dark, mist laden string of [illegible]. Old and deaf, half blind, he said about himself, the air [illegible] his throat.

—Henry Green, *Concluding*

2 Sometimes I dress,
And chat away the glasses
Quit the stiff garb of [illegible]
And wear a gay impertinence
Nor think nor speak wit[illegible]
But lay on fancy's sa[illegible]
Talk of unusual swell of [illegible]
In mold of honour [illegible]
And beauty borrowing [illegible]
And loving pair with [illegible]
And jewels pawned for [illegible]
And then redeemed by [illegible]
Of Kirty (aunt left [illegible]
By grave prudence [illegible]
Perceived in back and [illegible]
Like Will and Hay [illegible]
And thus in modish [illegible]
In aid of sugar, [illegible]

—From Matthew Green, *The Spleen*.

3 It is the reproach of [illegible] that they have too often made history into a mere record of butchery of men by their [illegible]men. But war plays a [illegible] in the real story of [illegible] nations, and in that of England part is smaller than in any. The war which has profoundly [illegible] English society and English [illegible]ment is the Hundred Years' [illegible] with France, and of that war results were simply evil. If [illegible] tal little of the glories of [illegible] it is because I have dwelt [illegible] the wrong and misery [illegible] prompted the rerse of Longland [illegible] the preaching of Ball. But [illegible] other hand, I have never [illegible] from telling at length the [illegible] of peace. I have restored [illegible] place among the achievements [illegible] Englishmen the "Faerie Queene" and the "Novum Organum"; I set Shakespeare among the [illegible] of the Elizabethan age, and [illegible] scientific enquiries of the [illegible] Society side by side with the [illegible]ies of the New Model.

J. R. Green, *A Short History of the English People* (1893)

Fifty years on . . .

The TLS of October 30, 1930, led with a long historical article on "The Position of Women". Two books were discussed: Hugh Wiley Puckett's Germany's Women Go Forward and R. Holzstätter's Die Arbeitende Frau:

. . . It is perhaps too soon to judge this great emancipation. Women are still adjusting themselves to new conditions, and men are watching them calmly. It is, we believe, a delusion to hold that women have been kept under by masculine jealousy. The opposition was due to more tu doubles of their fitness to undertake various functions hitherto discharged by men. The exceptional woman might be allowed; just as there are exceptional men who resemble women, so there are exceptional women who resemble men. To offer to the general body the opportunities now granted was a different matter; and it is still uncertain what use they will make of them. In view of the physical and emotional differences between the sexes, it is merely misleading to speak of their equality without any qualification. Women may be equal in the sense of being competent to perform many of the tasks that have been denied them, but they are and remain collectively different from men; the two are complementary to each other, not rivals. But there is one unique function which can be discharged only by woman, and which handicaps her for other duties during the active years of life—the function of motherhood. Dr Holzstätter . . . goes into this most important question . . .

He puts all the responsibility on the men, and holds the general view that marriage, the care of the home and the children, is the function ordained by nature for the great majority of women, the one for which they are perfectly fitted . . .

Holding these views, he naturally finds many disquieting signs of the present position. He particularly condemns the Soviet marriage laws which tend deliberately to abolish family life and are of no real interest because the conditions in Russia are regarded as an experiment, and the proletariat, and in fact female trade unionists looks in the East for her emancipation. He regards the striking and powerful [illegible] of the birth-rate with misgiving [illegible]

The principal cause is declared to be silent, in this and other respects, we do not think the evidence provides sufficient for the general inferences he makes. But we must leave it to the reader to decide.

A. J. L. BARNES.
D. J. NICHOLSON.

The London School of Economics and Political Science, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE.

Jerome Kern

Sir,—I read with great interest and pleasure Roy Fuller's thoughtful review of my book, *Jerome Kern: Life and Music* (September 19). I found myself agreeing with many of his carefully considered criticisms.

However, I was dismayed to read several weeks later a letter from Miss Miller stating that I had consulted the BBC Music Library *Song Catalogue*, which is one of the few Kern songs I did not locate. I spent a month in England interviewing Kern's living associates and ploughing through the resources of your many libraries. The only place that I failed to cooperate was the BBC, although I trust it was not Miss Miller with whom I dealt.

I have since received a copy of the song in question, "Best Sort of Mother, Best Sort of Child," from Dr Norman Josephs. Unfortunately, it reached me after the book went to press. Nevertheless, I was happy to learn the correctness of my surmise that Kern had re-employed for the song the same melody he had used in his American song, "Same Sort of Girl".

GERALD BORDMAN.

Box 113, RD2 Nottingham, Pa 19362, USA.

'Paradise Lost'

Sir,—Robin Robbins, reviewing two books on *Paradise Lost* (October 24), says: "A limp acceptance of the assertion that Milton begins according to classical practice in *medias res* is shown to have subconsciously distorted our focus on the poem."

But it is Milton himself, in the Argument prefixed to Book One of *Paradise Lost*, who says: "... the Poem hasts into the midst of things".

W. W. ROBSON.

Department of English Literature, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh EH8 9JX.

Whistled

Sir,—It is not surprising that the reviewer of *Dear Bill: The Collected Letters of Denis Thatcher* (October 17) was unable to find "faintly whistled" in the *Shorter Oxford* as a synonym for intoxication. It is obviously a careless corruption of "mildly whiffled"; a synonym frequently employed by the late Bertram Wooster and his cronies at the Drones' Club.

IAN D. L. CLARK.

St Catharine's College, Cambridge CB2 1RL.

Goethe

Sir,—George Steiner imagines, among "the Goethe translations which we lack" (October 17), one which we certainly do not. I am referring to his suspicion that "John Arden could provide a masterly counterpart to *Götz* von Berlichingen".

Seventeen years ago (November, 1963) the Bristol Old Vic presented the première production of Arden's *Ironhand*, adapted from Goethe", under the directorship of Val May. Bristol theatregoers will remember it as a strong-willed, if somewhat leaden-footed, evocation of the complexities of sixteenth-century German politics. "Masterly"? It may not be, but stegosbly-Englished Goethe (and vintage Arden) it certainly is.

ROBERT POTTER.

Department of Dramatic Art, University of California, Santa Barbara, California 93106.

Sir,—A surprising omission from the list of English Goetherians found in George Steiner's brilliant "The graces of Goethe" (October 10) is the name of George Henry Lewes. It was Lewes following "Coleridge, Byron, Shelley and Carlyle" — to use Professor Steinar's words—who in his *The Life and Works of Goethe* (first published in 1855, third edition 1875) "engaged with Goethe's work and his commanding presence in European civilization". Matthew Arnold followed George Henry Lewes in seeking "to acquaint his readers with something of Goethe's centrality". *The Life and Works of Goethe* was by no means Lewes's only contribution to Goethe studies. His "Göthe", *British and Foreign Review*, March 1843, and his "Goethe as a Man of Science", *Westminster Review*, October 1852, among other essays, should not remain ignorad in the assessment of English expounds of Goethe's genius.

WILLIAM BAKER.

10 Streather Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands.

In the wake of the £10,000 Booker Prize, the Whitbread Literary Awards for 1980 will be announced on November 11. There are three categories, each with a prize of £2,500: Best Novel; Best Biography or Autobiography; Best Children's Book. In addition, one of the three winners will double its money as the Whitbread Book of the Year.

to the editor

Amery Diaries

Sir,—Nit-picking is never very pleasant, but unfortunately it is a fashionable habit among reviewers. Stephen Koss, having been a victim in the past, might have been expected to have developed an immunity. Alas, that is not the case. Your readers must judge for themselves when and if they turn to *The Leo Amery Diaries* how far his criticisms he voices of the same are justified (October 17). It may help them if we make one or two observations.

First, Koss assumes that all words are those of the editors. As we should know, in modern book production this is not the case. Both editors, thanks to the generosity of the publishers, have had their proof copies returned to them, and unfortunately it is clear that some errors crept in by them have none the less reached the printed page.

Secondly, Koss would seem to base his attack on very slender evidence. In one paragraph, for example, he lists precisely five errors, all of which, since they are corrected in the index, it could have been assumed more charitably were the result of proof corrections miscarrying. One is the result of the decision not to correct misspellings in the original text as explained in the editors' note. Perhaps questionable, but certainly not an error. We could go on, but would rather admit that a few errors have crept in. The publishers have already agreed to publish corrections in Volume 2. Your readers of the book will have to judge whether they are so numerous and central as Koss alleges and whether they warrant the serious charges Koss makes.

Since Koss devotes no less than seven lines to one footnote, however, and is particularly dislogenuous in his handling of it, we feel bound to comment further. Amery's diary deals with the pressure to put Lichenier in Haldane's place at the War Office. We note that the change was not made until August 6, 1914. Koss chooses to interpret our note to suggest that we are ignorant of the fact that Haldane was not Secretary of State for War in 1914. It is evident from Amery's text that he knew what was in fact the case, that while Asquith held the seals of the office, Haldane had been deputed on August 2 to do the real work. Indeed Grey tells us that Asquith's first thought had been to send Haldane back there immediately on a permanent basis. Our bridging passage on page 110 makes it quite clear that we are well aware that Haldane was Lord Chancellor at the time and not Secretary of State for War, and the phrase correctly notes of Asquith "who acted as Secretary of State for War March to August 1914". It may have been understandable if he had cavilled at the exact wording of the footnote, but an attitude of ignorance on the part of the editors suggests that Koss has not read even the few pages dealing with the outbreak of the First World War with the care one might expect. He certainly has not read the index with care since the Haldane conversation with Gwynne is filed under Gwynne, H.A., and so is missed despite Koss's claim to the contrary.

Sir,—A surprising omission from the list of English Goetherians found in George Steiner's brilliant "The graces of Goethe" (October 10) is the name of George Henry Lewes. It was Lewes following "Coleridge, Byron, Shelley and Carlyle" — to use Professor Steinar's words—who in his *The Life and Works of Goethe* (first published in 1855, third edition 1875) "engaged with Goethe's work and his commanding presence in European civilization". Matthew Arnold followed George Henry Lewes in seeking "to acquaint his readers with something of Goethe's centrality". *The Life and Works of Goethe* was by no means Lewes's only contribution to Goethe studies. His "Göthe", *British and Foreign Review*, March 1843, and his "Goethe as a Man of Science", *Westminster Review*, October 1852, among other essays, should not remain ignorad in the assessment of English expounds of Goethe's genius.

WILLIAM BAKER.

10 Streather Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands.

Homer

Sir,—It gives me great pleasure that S. R. West, in her admirable review of Jasper Griffin's *Homer on Life and Death* (October 24), highly praises a book which seems to me the most important study of Homer that has appeared in many years, and that she appreciates the value, after a long period during which Homeric scholarship was preoccupied with oral technique, with archaeology and with dubious history, of such an excellent study of the poetry of Homer.

I am surprised, however, that she has most reservations about the treatment of characterization, which seemed to me one of the best things of all. I do not feel that the different origins of different Homeric characters, even if we could speak of these with any degree of certainty, can make much difference to the way in which the poet has presented them. Mrs West writes that "some have thought" that Paris was originally the chief Trojan warrior and was only later replaced by Hector; even if that rather dubious speculation could be accepted, the portrayal of both brothers is clear and consistent and the contrast between them firmly placed in the structure of the poem. I think Griffin has done well to insist that "first characters in the poems can be different from each other; second, that they can be seen to intend things which they do not explicitly reveal as their intention; third, they can be complex, in ways which are rather different in the two poems".

HUGH LLOYD-JONES.

Christ Church, Oxford, OX1 1DP.

Stealing Purses

Sir,—Your correspondent John M. Wallace (October 17) writes all the way from Chicago to announce his discovery of a punning link between the Godshill incident and Falstaff's appropriation of Hotspur's body. In both episodes, he claims, Falstaff is stealing purses (Percies). This ignores the fact that on one occasion Falstaff is stealing purses and on the other he is stealing a Percy. Even if Falstaff had made off not only with Hotspur but with the entire Percy family, it would still have been an extremely feeble pun.

Mr Wallace suggests that other readers may be able to read more into the alleged joke than he can. He is too modest. He has surely read more than enough into it already, and also provided a good example of what one might call the Fluellen school of criticism: "There is a river in Macedon; and there is also moreover a river at Monmouth; it is called Wye at Monmouth, but it is out of my prains what is the name of the other river; but 'tis all one, 'tis alliko as my fingers is to fingers, and there is salmons in both."

RICHARD BOSTON.

Quanto, 20 Fitzroy Square, London W1.

'The Chances of Rhyme'

Sir,—I am at a loss to know why Donald Wesling (October 17) should think that my review of *The Chances of Rhyme* contains some crack about his salary—which I know nothing of and to which I had not given a thought. There seems to be nothing in my article which could possibly be construed as an allusion to the subject. Truth to tell, I am at a loss about several things in Professor Wesling's letter, not least the stunning news that his book was "written in part as an attempt to qualify the modern Augustan position C. H. Sisson stands for". Professor Wesling says I "saw that", but as my name does not occur in the book and I did not know that I stood for "the modern Augustan position" I did not, alas, get that point at all.

C. H. SISSON.

Monrfield Cottage, The Hill, Lougport, Somerse TA10 9PU.

HMS Mauritius

Sir,—Lord Chalfont writes a knowledgeable review (October 17) of the Shah of Iran's autobiography but he reveals in it a surprising lack of naval knowledge. HMS Mauritius, sent to Abadan in 1952, was a cruiser not a battleship, and the Shah's navy never contained a single cruiser.

J. K. CROOKSHANK.

Ivy House, North Street, Westbourne, Nr Emsworth, Hampshire.

'Gentiluomo'

Sir,—May I take the liberty of pointing out to you that at least two words engraving by Richard Shirley Smith—which you included in the *TLS* of September 19 (page 1016)—is rather ill fitted to illustrate the eighteenth-century British. The big-hatted gentleman, second from left, is in fact a revoraed copy of the portrait of a gentleman by Vittore Ghislandi da Fra' Galgario (1655-1745). The portrait is entitled "Gentiluomo" and is in exhibited at Milan, in the Museo Poldi Pozzoli.

SJOERD OE VRIES.

De Meel 23, Borculo, The Netherlands.

Medicated

Sir,—Are we to take it from Frederic Raphael's reference (Letters, October 3) to the "medicated habit" of using "geritric" to mean old that he has discovered some substance which will cure or alleviate misuse of language? Or which reinforces the misuse?

If not then tut, contestably no doubt but tut.

PETER EDWARDS.

2 Manor Court, Dovridge, Sutihull, West Midlands.

Czeslaw Milosz

Sir,—George Schöpflin's account of the political complexities of Czeslaw Milosz's life and work (October 17) is useful and accurate, but almost fails to mention what is surely the main point: namely, that Milosz is a major poet and that it was for his poetry that he was awarded the Nobel Prize. What is more, his poetry is by no means exclusively political.

Two volumes of his verse are available in English translation. The more substantial, *Selected Poems* (Seabury Press: New York 1973), is difficult to come by over here and deserves an English edition. The other, *Bells in Winter*, published this year by the Carcanet Press, consists mainly of recent work.

Milosz is also a notable verse translator: of his own work, of Zbigniew Herbert's *Selected Poems*, and of the various writers included in his *Post-War Polish Poetry*.

Many books written or edited by him have been published in our language but at present only one of them is still available in Britain. This is a situation which should now be rectified.

CLIVE WILMER.

14 Edward Street, Cambridge, CB1 2LS.

'The Dog Crusoe'

Sir,—Professor John Barnard, reviewing Pat Rogers on Robinson Crusoe (October 17), includes in a selection of "the novel's endless metamorphoses" "a Dog Crusoe", without mention of author. The reference is presumably to R. M. Ballantyne's *The Dog Crusoe and His Master: A Story of Adventure in the Western Prairies*. The definite article makes it clearer that the dog (an immense Newfoundland) is not a Crusoe, but is called Crusoe. His adventures bear not the slightest similarity to those of the man Crusoe; and Ballantyne even points out that the name is not owed to Defoe, being given by "a poor illiterate fisherman; who had never heard of the celebrated 'Robinson' in all his life".

T. J. BINYON.

Wadham College, Oxford OX1 3PN.

Among this week's contributors

JOHN ASHBERY's recent collections of poems include *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror*, 1975, and *Houseboat Days*, 1978.

BERNARD BERGONZI's books include *Reading the Thirties: Texts and Contexts*, 1978.

SIR ISAIAH BERLIN's *Personal Impressions*, volume four of his *Selected Writings*, is published this week. The other three volumes are *Russian Thinkers*, 1977, *Concepts and Categories*, 1978, and *Against the Current*, 1979.

C. R. BOXER's books include *Portuguese Society in the Tropics*, 1966, and *Anglo-Dutch Wars of the 17th Century*, 1974.

JOHN BROADBENT is Professor of English Literature at the University of East Anglia. His books include *Poetic Love*, 1964.

G. M. CARSTAIRS was Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Edinburgh, 1961-73. His books include *The Twice Born*, 1957, and *The Great Universe of Kotu*, 1976.

STEFAN COLLINI is the author of *Liberalism and Sociology*, 1978.

SARAH COAKLEY is a lecturer in Religious Studies at the University of Lancaster.

VALENTINE CUNNINGHAM is the author of *Everywhere Spoken Against: Dissent in the Victorian Novel*, 1975.

D. J. ENRIGHT's most recent collection of poems is *A Faust Book*, 1979.

KYRIL FITZLYON's most recent book is *Before the Revolution*, 1978.

JACK P. GREENE's books include *The American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century*, 1969.

PHYLLIS GROSSKURTH's books include *John Addington Symonds*, 1964, and *Havelock Ellis*, 1980.

NORMAN HAMMOND is the editor of *Mesoamerican Archaeology*, 1975.

JOHN HATCHER's books include *English Tin Production and Trade Before 1550*, 1974.

PETER KEMP's critical study, *Muriel Spark*, was published in 1974.

KENNETH KITCHIN is Reader in Oriental Studies at the University of Liverpool.

ERIC KOSH is an antiquarian bookseller in London.

GORDON LEFF is the author of *Dissolution of the Medieval Outlook*, 1976.

PATRICK MCCARTHY is the author of *Céline*, 1975.

IAIN MCGILCHRIST is a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford.

ROBERT B. MARTIN's biography of Tennyson, *The Unquiet Heart*, will be reviewed shortly in the *TLS*.

CYRIL MANGO's *Byzantium: the Empire of New Rome* was published earlier this year.

EDWARD MILLER is Master of Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, and the author of *Economic Policies and Public Finance 900-1500*, 1979.

ELIZABETH MOGERLY's *Suffering, Innocent and Guilty* was published in 1978.

JOHN NAUGHTON is a lecturer in Systems at the Open University.

ROBERT L. PATTEN is the author of *Charles Dickens and His Publishers*, 1978, and is the editor of the journal *Studies in English Literature: 1500-1900*.

JACQUELINE PEARSON's *Tragedy and Tragicomedy in the Plays of John Webster* will be reviewed in a future issue of the *TLS*.

CAROL RUMENS's most recent collection of poems is *A Necklace of Mirrors*, 1979.

GEORGE THIEMER is Assistant Editor of *Index on Censorship* and has translated widely from the Czech.

ANTHONY THWAITE's latest collection of poems, *Victorian Voices*, will be reviewed shortly in the *TLS*.

DAVID TROTTER's *The Poetry of Abraham Cowley* was published earlier this year.

J. F. WATKINS is Professor of Microbiology at The Welsh National School of Medicine, Cardiff.

AUBERON WAUGH has written a new introduction to *The Selected Letters of Sydney Smith*, edited by Nowell C. Smith, which will be published early next year.

STANLEY WELLS is General Editor of the *Oxford Shakespeare*.

The challenge of the sea

By Edward Miller

RICHARD W. UNGER:
The Ship in the Medieval Economy 600-1600
304pp. Croom Helm. £14.95.
0 85664 949 X

Not so many years ago the history of medieval shipping was not taken too seriously in some quarters: it was a subject suitable merely for the somewhat intermittent attentions of Lucky Jim. Today the situation is very different, for the history of shipping is something of a growth industry. It has attracted intensive documentary research, but over and above that much additional material evidence is being provided by maritime archaeology. For this reason Richard W. Unger's *The Ship in the Medieval Economy, 600-1600* not only presents the fruits of work done in many libraries, he also acknowledges help from the staffs of maritime museums in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, among others, and notes the useful digs, again among others, conducted by the Institute of Nautical Archaeology at Texas A and M University.

Dr Unger sets himself a very large task. His subject is the relationship of developments in ship design to the economic and other influences conditioning those developments and to their consequences in the European economy as a whole. The context, moreover, is all Europe, and ultimately, as European horizons widened, Africa, the New World and the Indies cannot be ignored. The time-span stretches over a thousand years, from the last days of Rome in those of Philip II and Elizabeth I, from the time when "Roman vessels were built like fine pieces of furniture" to that of the "stately Spanish galleon . . . dipping through the Tropics".

Unger's approach, however, shares none of Masefield's romantic and nostalgic view of ships and the sea; it is severely technical, but for those lacking his expert knowledge of ship construction, propulsion and rigging he provides assistance in the form of twenty-seven pages of illustrations and diagrams. Changes in ship design are central to his story, even though conservatism in this matter was logical. The sea and its challenge did not change, so that design changes were not to be slow, especially in the Mediterranean where ships retained many features of their Ramas prototypes over much of Unger's millenium. This did not apply only to Indian ships: it was true of Byzantine vessels and of Arab craft when Islam, too, took to the sea. Not until around 1300 did the great galleys of Italy venture out onto the sea-routes to Bruges and London, in doing so supplementing their oars with more sail; and about the same time the Genoese innovated the cog design from northern Europe for bulk cargoes like wine and grain and alum. The long-standing differences between Mediterranean and north European shipping gave way thenceforward to increasing similarities.

In many respects, however, northern Europe was as essentially conservative as the south. There, too, we start with oared barges and prototype hulks and cogs, the sailing merchant vessels with which the Frisians built their commercial empire. From the barges developed the Viking long-ships which enabled the Scandinavians to undertake their remarkable voyages of exploration and conquest; while cogs and hulks grew into the bulk carriers of the north, until their designs were merged c 1400 to combine the advantages of both. The great medieval innovation, on the other hand, was common to north and south. This was the full-rigged ship, a three-master with a system of rigging which could be adapted to a variety of vessels each suited to a particular purpose. It was in fact adapted for the carracks carrying bulk cargoes in the Mediterranean or voyaging to the Indies, for caravels crossing the Atlantic, for galleons bringing American treasure back to Spain, for the Baltic merchantmen that were being built at Gdansk for the 1470s, and finally in the late sixteenth century for the fluyt, the boat designed by the Dutch as an efficient and economic bulk carrier. This last boat continued in fact to be the model cargo vessel for Europe's expanding commerce.

It is reasonable to regard these design changes, as Unger does, as a story of progress, or adapting the types of vessel to the specific tasks which was called upon to undertake. In this respect the naval demands of governments played a part, although there were times when they produced extravagance rather than improvement. That a French warship had a tennis court on board did not increase its naval capabilities and the fact that it was so lofty that, after one voyage, it was blown over on its side in a storm does not speak highly for its seaworthiness. The movement of goods, however, and especially the movement of bulk goods that were difficult and expensive to move overland, were the principal demands upon water transport and, consequently, the principal economic influences upon ship design. The cog and the hulk, the carrack and the fluyt, therefore, are at the very heart of Unger's story.

Other things, of course, affected maritime capability: better navigation, better ship's instruments and the like. Conversely, the lack of improved navigation was an infinitely pervasive, yet sometimes stubborn, cagerness to sail more and more boldly and for longer periods, so that the really crucial factor in the ship perhaps stands out more clearly than he intended: the migration of the Norsemen and the Frisians in an age that, indeed, is the integration of the North Sea and Baltic regions into an improved cog contributed to the bringing together of northern and southern Europe as galleys sought northern waters. Ultimately, western European ventures around Africa and across the Atlantic hoisted the last point ship designers and builders alike had to face challenges of intensity different in kind from the past. Even the perennial quest was more active in tropical and sailing distances were greatly increased, and the knowledge of commercial transactions became a matter of complexity. This, however, is the logical point for Unger to stop; but just before he demonstrated the significance of shipping, both causal and symbolic, of technical developments during the ceiling millenium.

Seeds of Reformation

By Gordon Left

STEVEN OZMENT:
The Age of Reform 1250-1550
An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe.
458pp. Yale University Press. £15.75.
0 300 02477 0.

However much problems may be preferred to periods in studying history, relating the change from one epoch to another is itself among the most intractable historical problems. It involves operating on different historical wavelengths, not least coming to terms with different historiographical traditions. The divisions into ancient, medieval, early modern and modern history may indeed be merely a convenience, but the writing of medieval history has largely evolved within them, each with its separate expertise. Even with a growing tendency to enter the no man's land between these boundaries, few have the temerity or the command to do it.

Steven Ozment is one of those few. His latest book covers the intellectual and religious history of the later Middle Ages and the Reformation. Although anything like a full synthesis of the period between 1250 and 1550 is probably still far off, his book will be widely welcomed. It is not only a clear and coherent substantive history; it is also an extremely fair-minded discussion of the interpretations and issues involved. Those coming to the book will, therefore, have the double benefit of an authoritative account both of the subject and the contemporary state of the subject.

Strictly speaking, despite the book's subtitle, the intellectual history is religious intellectual history rather than the history of philosophical and abstract ideas; apart from a summary of the theories of knowledge of Augustine, Aquinas and Ockham, its main emphasis, in keeping with recent trends—including Professor Ozment's own work, are theological, spiritual and ecclesiological. Separate chapters on these topics together with one on society before the Reformation form the Pre-Reformation component.

Of necessity, within the limits of even a big book like this one, the treatment has to be fairly summary, and also occasionally arbitrary in the selection of topics (a notable omission is that of any discussion of Wycliff). The Reformation chapters are both more detailed and add a further biographical dimension which in Luther's case includes a balanced and effective assessment of psychoanalysis in history: the most striking lack here is no adequate account of Calvin's theology.

The connection between the two parts hardly needs stating; to quote the dust-jacket, "the seeds of the Reformation were sown in the Middle Ages". Few would disagree; and Ozment has himself in an earlier work helped to point the connection between later medieval mysticism and the more radical forms of sixteenth-century dissent. In this book he extends it over the whole religious front of the theology of justification, spirituality and the place of the Church in relation to both of these and to temporal authority. In each the role of the Church came under increasing attack from the beginning of the fourteenth century; and with the failure in reform itself through the Conciliar movement, it had already lost its effective ecumenicity by the middle of the fifteenth century.

Luther had many forerunners; what he did, which none of them had done before, was to translate the widespread rejection of priestly mediation and outward forms, and the desire for a more direct and personal religion, into a distinctive theology of justification by faith and to defend it by successful revolt against the papacy. He thereby made the irrevocable break between Christianity and Rome which his predecessors had failed to achieve.

To Ozment it was the culmination of the Church's refusal to relinquish its hegemony whether over the intellect, the spirit or society. "The central problem of late medieval intellectual and religious history was the mentality that had given birth to the synthesis of reason and revelation, the presumptuous, seductive vision of high medieval theology": presumptuous because it subordinated reason to revelation. Aquinas, according to Ozment, was its author and his conception was taken over by the later medieval Church. Far from being a "perfect synthesis" from which later medieval thought strayed, the scholastic synthesis of reason and revelation in the thirteenth century was a chief source of both the intellectual and ecclesiastical conflicts of the later Middle Ages". Not, however, if either Ozment's own book is anything to go by or if developments in philosophy outside it are considered.

The separation of reason from revelation was an increasingly accomplished fact in the fourteenth century: to be seen in the hold of Ockhamism, the hostility to scholasticism on the part of thinkers like Pitzralph and Gerson, the widespread spirituality, the opposition to the juridical power of the Church. Nor did it necessarily lead to conflict: the greatest ecclesiastical conflicts of the later Middle Ages were within the Church, in the Great Schism and between the conciliar movement and popes. By the time he comes to a resumé of the characteristics of later medieval intellectual and religious history, Ozment approaches the position which he has been opposing, as he disarmingly acknowledges.

In many ways the argument, as so often, is about definitions. Ozment is tearing against the interpretation of the late Johan Huizinga, who saw the New Ages as a period of intellectual decline following the rejection of the Thomist synthesis.

In reply, those like Ozment justifiably point to important positive achievements in the late Middle Ages, even if after the end of the fourteenth century they are more apparent in theology and philosophy. The claim that the late Middle Ages have become something of an obsession but it is possible to overmuch and not to enough of literature from the fourteenth century belies the complexity of faith and reason. Indeed there seems on reasonable grounds of discontinuity and development should not be accepted. What it would be hard to deny is that the late Middle Ages were in an almost phase in religion. And they not been for Ozment could not have written his book.

To the manor born

By John Hatcher

ZVI RAZI:
Life, Marriage and Death in a Medieval Parish
Economy, Society and Demography in Halesowen, 1270-1400
162pp. Cambridge University Press. £12.
0 521 23252 X

If the title of this book is suggestive of an English equivalent of Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's *Montaillou*, its contents soon reveal that it belongs to quite a different genre. Although both books are studies of medieval rural communities, what Zvi Razi has discovered of the lives of the inhabitants of the twelve hamlets which made up the large West Midlands manor of Halesowen comes not from their personal testimonies but from a painstaking scrutiny of voluminous court records. While each of the many thousands of pieces of evidence which he has garnered is scarcely significant by itself when they are systematically gathered together they help to present a most detailed and illuminating picture of many of the more fundamental aspects of rural life in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Life, Marriage and Death in a Medieval Parish is an important pioneering work. If subjected to thorough analysis manor court-rolls offer one of the most promising paths for extending our knowledge of society in the pre-Industrial era. The potential value of these documents is now recognized, and in recent years bands of researchers and substantial funds have been devoted to their scrutiny. A number of studies of English villages have been published by scholars of the Toronto school under the guidance of Professor Rutis, but the findings of the new wave of English scholars, based upon a more sophisticated methodology and pursuing somewhat different objectives, are still awaited. This makes Dr Razi's achievement, being as it is the product of individual research for a Birmingham PhD, all the more creditable.

The foundations of his book are provided by some 1,667 court sessions held between 1270 and 1400. Analysis of these produced over 5,000 different names; Razi then recorded on cards all the court appearances of each name. This was a massive exercise, but his task from then on was greatly facilitated by the fact that eighty per cent of the names appeared more than ten times, and each name appeared on average of fifteen times. Such frequencies, I suspect, are not likely to prove typical of English manors as a whole. By a series of procedures these names were converted into persons, in itself no easy undertaking given the inconsistency of surnames in this period. Finally from the resulting data base Razi went on to reconstitute a total of almost 700 Halesowen families using the explicit genealogical references in the rolls, and a further 364 families, predominantly from the poorer strata of village society, using a combination of explicit and "hypothetical" information.

Razi's findings range over a wide spectrum of peasant life but are primarily demographic. His reconstruction of population levels from court-roll head-counts shows a growth of around a half between 1270 and the Black Death, with the notorious famines and agrarian crisis of 1315-22 offering only a temporary setback; followed by a decline of around a half in the next forty years. The net result was that the population of the manor in 1400 was approximately twenty-five per cent fewer than it had been in 1270. Demographic conditions which lay behind these changes are illuminated by the presentation of much material on the mortality of tenants, the numbers of sons olive at the deaths of their fathers, expectations of life, marriage patterns and illegitimacy. Dr Razi's researches also sharpen the detail of our knowledge of the effects of harvest failure on poor communities by cataloguing not only the increased mortality but concomitant increases in prosecutions for illegal gleaning of corn, pleas of debt, and land sales and leases.

Despite the mass of data this is not a book which simply gathers and presents statistics, it contains a strong thread of interpretation and argument. Indeed we have here further evidence, if further evidence were needed, that a greater emphasis on quantification does not lessen the necessity for historical judgment. At every stage Razi has had to make decisions and assessments which influence the final form of the data and the deductions that can be made from them. Recorded names have had to be transformed into persons and populations, heriots into death rates, *merchets* into marriage rates, and ages have had to be computed from dates of successions to holdings. Even higher skills have had to be brought to bear upon such crucial problems as how to compensate for the under-recording of the activities of the poorer inhabitants of Halesowen. There is much in the methodology adopted by Razi that is certain to prove invaluable to future workers in this field, inevitably in a pioneering sense of his techniques amended and improved upon.

Technical as parts of his work are, it is not of value and interest only to specialists. Perhaps most aware of the broader implications of the evidence which he has assembled, he draws from it a number of bold conclusions at the heart of his interpretation: the breakdown of Halesowen society by wealth. The court-roll evidence that there were marked differences in the expectations of life, marriage, and fertility between rich living longer, marrying and producing more children than the poorer, and that the children of different wealth groups had a greater chance of survival in the author's opinion, underpressed, the demographic differences between strata of villagers were created by economic forces and not vice versa.

If these findings are likely to meet with general acceptance there are others which seem more debatable and some which seem to prove controversial. One of the contention that the existence of differences between rich and poor families were so marked that the family per cent growth in the population of the parish in the last 30 years before the Black Death was due to a rate of fertility solely due to substantially higher mortality among the poorer families to reproduce themselves. Instinctively one must ask whether there were enough "rich" families to have had an impact, and one would need an assurance that the relative dearth of children and the high death of life among the poor was not a feast in part a consequence of a relatively greater under-recording of the poor in court rolls.

Conversations with Russian poets

By Isaiah Berlin

I

To the summer of 1945 the British Embassy in Moscow reported that it was short-handed, especially in the matter of officials who knew Russian, and it was suggested that I might fill a gap for four or five months. I accepted this offer eagerly, naively, I must admit, because of my great desire to learn about the condition of Russian literature and art, about which relatively little was known in the West at that time. I knew something, of course, of what had happened to Russian writers and artists in the 1920s and 30s. The Revolution had stimulated a great wave of creative energy in Russia, in all the arts; bold experimentalism was everywhere encouraged: the new controllers of culture did not interfere with anything that could be represented as being a "slap in the face" to bourgeois taste, whether it was Marxist or not. The new movement in the visual arts—the work of such painters as Kandinsky, Chagall, Soutine, Malevich, Klyun, Tatlin, the sculptors Arkhipenko, Pevsner, Gabo, Lipchitz, Zadkine, of the theatre and film directors Meyerhold, Vakhtangov, Tairov, Eisenstein, Pudovkin—produced masterpieces which had a powerful impact in the West; there was a similar upward curve in the field of literature and literary criticism. Despite the violence and devastation of the Civil War, and the ruin and chaos brought about by it, revolutionary art of extraordinary vitality continued to be produced.

I remember meeting Sergei Eisenstein in 1945; he was in a state of terrible depression: this was the result of Stalin's condemnation of the original version of his film *Ivan the Terrible*, because that savage ruler, with whom Stalin identified himself, faced with the need to repress the treachery of *the boyars*, had, so Stalin complained, been misrepresented as a man tormented to the point of neurosis. I asked Eisenstein what he thought were the best years of his life. He answered without hesitation: "The early 20s. That was the time. We were young and did marvellous things in the theatre. I remember once, grease pigs were put into the house among the members of the audience, who leapt on their seats and screamed. It was terrific. Goodness, how we enjoyed ourselves!"

This was obviously too good to last. An onslaught was delivered against by doctrinaire zealots who demanded collective proletarian art. Then Stalin decided to put an end to all these politico-literary squabbles as a sheer waste of time and energy—not at all what was needed for Five Year Plans. The Writers' Union was created in the mid-1930s to impose orthodoxy. There was to be no more argument, no disturbance of men's minds. A dead level of conformism followed. Then came the final horror—the Great Purge, the political show trials, the mounting terror of 1937-38, the wild and indiscriminate mowing down of individuals and groups, later of whole peoples. I need not dwell on the facts of that murderous period; for the first, not probably the last, in the history of Russia. Authentic accounts of the life of the intelligentsia in that time are to be found in the memoirs of, for example, Nadezhda Mandelshtam, Lydia Chukovskaya, and, at a different level, in Akhmatova's poem *Requiem*. In 1939 Stalin called a halt to the proscriptions. Russian literature, art and thought emerged like an area that had been subjected to bombardment, with some visible buildings still relatively intact, but standing bare and solitary in a landscape of ruined and deserted streets.

Then came the German invasion, and in extraordinary thing happened. The need to achieve national unity in the face of the enemy led to some relaxation of the political controls. In the great wave of Russian patriotic feeling, writers old and young, particularly poets, whom their readers felt to be speaking for them, for what they themselves felt and believed—these writers were idolized as never before. Poets whose work had been regarded with disfavour by the authorities and consequently published seldom, if at all, suddenly received letters from soldiers at the fronts, as often as not quoting their least political and most personal lines. Boris Pasternak and Anna Akhmatova, who had for a long time lived in a kind of internal exile, began to receive an astonishingly large number of letters from soldiers quoting from both published and unpublished poems; there was a stream of requests for autographs, for confirmation of the authenticity of texts, for expressions of the author's attitude to this or that problem. In the end this impressed itself on the minds of some of the Party's leaders.

The status and personal security of these frowned-upon poets were, in consequence, improved. Public readings by poets, as well as the reciting from memory of poetry at private gatherings, had been common in pre-revolutionary Russia. What was novel was that when Pasternak and Akhmatova read their poems, and occasionally halted for a word, there were always, among the vast audiences gathered to hear them, one or two listeners who prompted them at once with lines from works both published and unpublished, and in any case not publicly available. No writer could help being moved and drawing strength from this most genuine form of homage.

The status of the handful of poets who clearly rose far above the rest was, I found, unique. Neither painters nor composers nor prose-writers, not even the most popular actors, or eloquent, patriotic journalists, were loved and admired so deeply and so universally, especially by the kind of people I spoke to in trams and trains and the tuba, some of whom admitted that they had never read a word of their writings. The most famous and widely worshipped of all Russian poets was Boris Pasternak. I longed to meet him more than any other human being in the Soviet Union. I was warned that it was very difficult to meet those whom the authorities did not permit to appear at official receptions, where foreigners could meet only carefully selected Soviet citizens—the others had had it very forcibly impressed upon them that it was neither desirable nor safe for them to meet foreigners, particularly in private. I was lucky. By a fortuitous concatenation of circumstances, I did contrive, very early during my stay, to call upon Pasternak at his country cottage in the writers' village of Peredelkino, near Moscow.

II

I went to see him on a warm, sunlit afternoon in September 1945. The poet, his wife and his son Leonid were seated round a rough wooden table at the back of the dacha. Pasternak greeted me warmly. He was once described by his friend, the poetess Marina Tsvetaeva, as looking like an Arab and his horse—he had a dark, melancholy, expressive, very *raca* face, familiar from many photographs and from his father's paintings. He spoke slowly in a low tenor monotone, with a continuous, even sound, something between a humming and a drone, which those who met him almost always remarked upon: each vowel was elongated as if in some plaintive aria in an opera by Tchaikovsky, but with far more concentrated force and tension.

Almost at once Pasternak said "You come from England. I was in London in the 30s—in 1935, on my way back from the Anti-Fascist Congress in Paris." He then said that during the summer of that year he had suddenly received a telephone call from the authorities, who told him that a congress of writers was in session in Paris and that he was to go to it without delay. He said that he had no suitable clothes—"We will see to that", said the officials. They tried to fit him out in a formal morning coat and striped trousers, a shirt with stiff cuffs and a wing collar, and black patent leather boots, which fitted perfectly. But he was, in the end, allowed to go in ordinary clothes. He was later told that André Malraux, the organizer of the Congress, had insisted on getting him invited; Malraux had told the Soviet authorities that although he fully understand their reluctance to do so, yet not to send Pasternak and Babel to Paris might cause unnecessary speculation; they were very well-known Soviet writers, and there were not many such in those days so likely to appeal to European liberals. "You cannot imagine how many celebrities were there", Pasternak said—"Dreiser, Gide, Malraux, Aragon, Auden, Forster, Rosamond Lehmann and lots of other terribly famous people. I spoke. I said to them 'I understand that this is a meeting of writers to organize resistance to Fascism. I have only one thing to say to you: Do not organize. Organization is the death of art. Only personal independance matters. In 1789, 1848, 1917, writers were not organized for or against anything. Do not, I implore you, do not organize.'

"I think they were surprised, but what else could I say? I thought I would get into trouble at home after that, but no one ever said a word to me about it, then or now."

Then I went in London and travelled back in one of our boats, and shared a cabin with Shcherbakov, who was then the Secretary of the Writers' Union, tremendously influential, and afterwards a member of the Politburo. I talked unceasingly, day and night. He begged me to stop and let him sleep. But I went on and on. Paris and London had awoken me, I could not stop. He begged for mercy but I was relentless. He must have thought me quite deranged: it may be that this helped me afterwards." He meant, I think, that to be thought a little mad, or at least extremely eccentric, may have helped to save him during the Great Purge.

Pasternak then asked me if I had read his prose, in particular *The Childhood of Luvers*. "I saw by your expression", he said, meaning justly, "that you think that these writings are contrived, tortured, self-conscious, horribly modernist—no, no, don't deny it, you do think this, and you are absolutely right. I am ashamed of them—not of my poetry, but of my prose—it was influenced by what was weakest and most muddled in the symbolist movement, fashionable in those years, full of mystical chaos—of course Andrey Bely was a genius—*Petersburg*, *Kotik Letaev* are full of wonderful things—I know that, you need not tell me—but his influence was fatal. Joyce is another matter—all that I wrote than was obsessed, forced, broken, artificial, no use [negodno]; but now I am writing something entirely different: something new, quite new, luminous, elegant, well-proportioned [stroinoe], classically pure and simple—what Winckelmann wanted, yes, and Goethe; and this will be my last word, my most important word, to the world. It is, yes, it is, what I wish to be remembered by; I shall devote the rest of my life to it."

I cannot vouch for the complete accuracy of all these words, but this is how I remember them. This projected work later became *Doctor Zhivago*. He had by 1945 completed a draft of the first chapters, which he asked me to read, and send to his sisters in Oxford; I did so, but was not to know about the plan for the entire novel until much later. After that, Pasternak was silent for a while; none of us spoke. He then told us how much he liked Georgia, Georgian writers, Yashvili, Tabidze, and Georgian wine, how well received there he always was. After this he politely asked me about what was going on in the West; I did. I knew Herbert Read and his doctrine of personalism? Here he explained that his belief in personal freedom was derived from Kantian individualism—Blok had misinterpreted Kant completely in his poem *Kant*. There was nothing here in Russia about which he could tell me. I must realize that the clock had stopped in Russia (I noticed that neither he nor any of the other writers I met ever used the words "Soviet Union") in 1928 or so, when relations with the outer world were in effect cut off; the description of him and his work in, for instance, the *Soviet Encyclopaedia*, bore no reference to his later life or writings.

He was interrupted by Lydia Seifullina, an elderly, well-known writer, who broke in while he was in mid-course: "My fate is exactly the same", she said. "The last lines of the Encyclopedia article about me say 'Seifullina is at present in a state of psychological and artistic crisis'—the article has not been changed during the past twenty years. Are as the Soviet reader is concerned, I am in a state of crisis, of suspended animation. We are like people in Pompeii, you and I, Boris Leonidovich, buried by ashes in mid-sentence. And we know so little: Meterlinck and Kipling, I know, are dead; but Wells, Sinclair Lewis, Joyce, Bunin, Khodasevich—are they alive?" Pasternak looked embarrassed and changed the subject. He had been reading Proust—French communist friends had sent him the entire masterpiece—he knew it, he said, and had read it lately. He had not then heard of Sartre or Camus, and thought little of Hemingway ("Why Anna Andreevna [Akhmatova] thinks anything of him I cannot imagine", he said).

He spoke in magnificent, slow-moving periods, with occasional intense rushes of words. His talk often overflowed the banks of grammatical structure—lucid passages were succeeded by wild but always marvellously vivid and concrete images—and these might be followed by dark words whose it was difficult to follow him—what then he would suddenly come into the clear again. His speech was at all times that of a poet, as were his writings. Someone once said that there are poets who are poets when they write poetry and prose-writers when they write prose; others are poets in everything that they write. Pasternak was a poet of genius in all that he did and was. As far as conversation, I cannot begin to describe its quality. The only other person I have met who talked as he talked was Virginia Woolf, who made one's mind race as he did, and obliterated one's normal vision of reality in this same exhilarating and, at times, terrifying way.

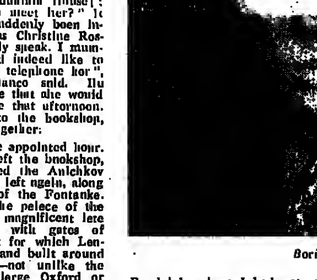
I use the word "genius" advisedly. I am sometimes asked what I mean by this highly evocative but imprecise term. In answer I can only say this: the dancer Nijinsky was once asked how he managed to leap so high. He is reported to have answered that he saw no great problem in this. Most people when they leapt in the air came down at once. "Why should you come down immediately? Stay in the air little longer before you return, why not?" he is reported to have said. One of the criteria of genius seems to me to be precisely this: the power to do something perfectly simple and easy that ordinary people cannot, and know that they cannot, do—nor do they know how it is done, or why they cannot begin to do it. Pasternak at times spoke in great leaps; his use of words was the most imaginative that I have ever known; it was wild and very moving. There are, no doubt, many varieties of literary genius: Eliot, Joyce, Yeats, Auden, Russell, did not (to my experience) talk like this. I did not wish to overstay my welcome; I left the poet, excited, and indeed overwhelmed, by his words and by his personality.

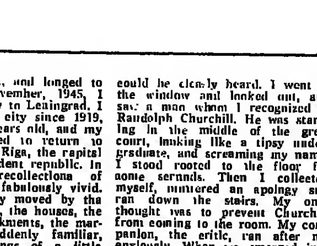
After Pasternak returned to Moscow, I visited him almost weekly, and came to know him well. I cannot hope to describe the transforming effect of his presence, his voice and gestures. He talked about books and writers; he loved Proust and was steeped in his writings, and Ulysses—he had not, at any rate then, read Joyce's later work. He

African Tea Ceremony

The tea-garden, going to grass, was a bright place once,
noisy with the sounds of china travelling to the music
of spoons as the waiters in broad red sashes stepped out
along the concrete cake-walks between the tables,
pocked (rain bouncing at their chests; jutting like beauty queens.
This was always how the garden liked to picture itself,
floating above the grass in fish-eyed images
reflecting from burning silver, dancing along a knife,
trapped around a sugar bowl. It was the bluff assurance
of cheap replaceable crockery; the heavy cups spoke it,
squatting in their saucers, opening thick white lips among
honey-pots and horizons; these fragrant rites secured us,
they sweetened the tooth of the ceremony during which
the African sun itself was taken and hung out over the trees
like a brass tea-gong. It said: for the moment we are all right.
And in the form of a delicate steam our thoughts went up
to all the gods of afternoon. No one noticed when
the rain of shadows began. They dropped from the Bougainvillea
spattering everything, deepening in the grassy hollows
until they brimmed. And the grass which had always seemed
poor yellow stuff, somehow too hot to live, forever dying back,
was drinking it all in and everything that had been solid
was liquid and shifting. I remember how the old water trucks
did this when they hit the baking sand streets I lived on;
the dirt leaped puckering at the big drops and drank them
and suddenly whole streets were running; spreading pools
furred in thick red dust log everywhere like flung pelts.
The tea-garden is empty, silent; only the rust eats at the tables
now, the waiters are dead or in hiding, the gods of afternoon
have got down and gone indoors, or underground, or elsewhere.
Only the grass is winning, its rich circuitry of yellow roots
is spreading, digging in. The evening light settles in waves,
a strong-coloured infusion that darkens as it drows night in.

Christopher Hope





spoke about French symbolists, and about Verhaeren and Rilke, both of whom he had met; he greatly admired Rilke, both as a man and a writer. He was steeped in Shakespeare. He was dissatisfied with his own translations: "I have tried to make Shakespeare work for me", he said, "but it has not been a success." He grew up, he said, in the shadow of Tolstoy—for him an incomparable genius, greater than Dickens or Dostoevsky, a writer who stood with Shakespeare and Goethe and Pushkin. His father, the painter, had taken him to see Tolstoy on his deathbed, in 1910, at Astapovo. He found it impossible to be critical towards Tolstoy: Russia and Tolstoy were one. As for Russian poets, Blok was of course the dominant genius of his time, but he did not find him sympathetic. Bely was closer to him, a man of strange and unheard-of insights—magical and a holy fool in the tradition of Russian Orthodoxy. Bryusov he considered a self-constructed, ingenious, mechanical musical-box, a clever, calculating operator, not a poet at all. He did not mention Mandel'shtam. He felt most tenderly towards Marina Tsvetaeva, to whom he had been bound by many years of friendship.

His feelings towards Mayakovsky were more ambivalent: he had known him well, they had been close friends, and he had learnt from him; he was, of course, a titanic destroyer of old forms, but, he added, unlike other communists, he was at all times a human being—but no, not a major poet, not an immortal god like Tyutchev or Blok, not even a demi-god, like Fet or Bely. Time had diminished him. He was needed in his day, he was what those times had called for. There are poets, he said, who have their hour, Aseev, poor Klyuev—liquidated—Sel'vinsky—even Esenin. They fulfil an urgent need of the day, their gifts are of crucial importance to the development of poetry in their country, and then they are no more; Mayakovsky was the greatest of these—*The Cloud in Trousers* had its historical importance, but the shouting was unbearable: he inflated his talent and tortured it until it burst. The sad rags of the multi-coloured balloon still lay in one's path, if one was a Russian. He was gifted, important, but coarse and not grown up, and ended as a poster-artist. Mayakovsky's love affairs had been disastrous for him as a man and a poet. He, Pasternak, had loved Mayakovsky as a man; his suicide was one of the blackest days of his own life.

Pasternak was a Russian patriot—his sense of his own historical connection with his country was very deep. He told me, again and again, how glad he was to spend his summers in the writers' village, Peredelkino, for it had once been part of the estate of that great Slavophil, Yury Samarin. The true line of tradition led from the legendary Sadko to the Stroganovs and the Kochubeys, to Derzhavin, Zhukovsky, Tyutchev, Pushkin, Baratynsky, Lermontov, Fet, Annensky, to the Aksakovs, Tolstoy, Bunin—to the Slavophils, not to the liberal intelligentsia, which, as Tolstoy maintained, did not know what man lived by. This passionate, almost obsessive, desire to be thought a true Russian writer, with roots deep in Russian soil, was particularly evident in his negative feelings towards his Jewish origins. He was unwilling to discuss the subject—he was not embarrassed by it, but he disliked it: he wished the Jews to disappear as a people.

His artistic taste had been formed in his youth and he remained faithful to the masters of that period. The memory of Scriabin—he had thought of becoming a composer himself—was sacred to him. I shall not easily forget the paean of praise offered by both Pasternak and Neuhaus (the celebrated musician, and former husband of Pasternak's wife Zinaida) to Scriabin, and to the symbolist painter Vrubel, whom, with Nicholas Roerich, they prized above all contemporary painters. Picasso and Matisse, Braque and Bonnard, Klee and Mondrian, seemed to mean as little to them as Kandinsky or Malevich.

There is a sense in which Akhmatova and her contemporaries, Gumilev and Marina Tsvetaeva, are the last great voices of the nineteenth century—perhaps Pasternak occupies an interspace between the two centuries, and so, perhaps, does Mandel'shtam. They were the last representatives of what can only be called the second Russian renaissance, basically untouched by the modern movement, by Picasso, Stravinsky, Eliot, Joyce, Schoenberg, even if they admired them; for the modern movement in Russia was aborted by political events (the poetry of Mandel'shtam is another story). Pasternak loved Russia. He was prepared to forgive his country all her shortcomings, all save the barbarism of Stalin's reign; but even that, in 1945, he regarded as the darkness before the dawn which he was straining his eyes to detect—the hope expressed in the last chapters of *Doctor Zhivago*. He believed himself to be in communion with the inner life of the Russian people, to share its hopes and fears and dreams, to be its voice as, in their different fashions, Tyutchev, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Chekhov and Blok had been (by the time I knew him he conceded nothing to Nekrasov).

In conversation with me during my Moscow visits, when we were always alone, before a polished desk on which not a book or a scrap of paper was to be seen, he repeated his conviction that he lived close to the heart of his country, and sternly and repeatedly denied this role to Gorky and Mayakovsky, especially to the former, and felt that *he* had something to say to the rulers of Russia, something of immense importance which only he could say, although what this was—he spoke of it often—seemed dark and incoherent to me. This may well have been due to lack of understanding on my part—although Anna Akhmatova told me that when he spoke in this prophetic strain, she, too, failed to understand him.

It was when he was in one of these ecstatic moods that he told me of the famous telephone conversation with Stalin about Mandel'shtam's arrest, of which many differing versions circulated and still circulate. I can only reproduce the story as I remember that he told it to me in 1945. According to his account he was in his Moscow flat with his wife and son and no one else, when the telephone rang, and a voice told him that it was the Kremlin speaking, and that comrade Stalin wished to speak to him. He assumed that this was an idiotic practical joke and put down his receiver. The telephone rang again, and the voice somehow convinced him that the call was authentic. Stalin then asked him whether he was speaking to Boris Leonidovich Pasternak. Pasternak said that it was indeed he. Stalin asked whether he was present when a lampoon about himself, Stalin, was recited by Mandel'shtam. Pasternak answered that it seemed to him of no importance whether he was or was not present, but that he was enormously happy that Stalin was speaking to him; that he had always known that this would happen; that they must meet and speak, speak about matters of supreme importance. Stalin then asked whether Mandel'shtam was a master. Pasternak replied that as poets they were very different; that he admired Mandel'shtam's poetry but felt no affinity with it; but that in any case, this was not the point at all.

Here, in recounting the episode to me, Pasternak again embarked on one of his great metaphysical flights about the cosmic turning-points in the world's history; it was these that he wished to discuss with Stalin—it was of supreme importance that he should do so. I can easily imagine that he spoke in this vein to Stalin too. At any rate, Stalin asked him again whether he was or was not present when Mandel'shtam read the lampoon. Pasternak answered again that what mattered most was his indispensable meeting with Stalin, that it must happen soon, that everything depended on it, that they must speak, speak about ultimate issues, about life and death. "If I were Mandel'shtam's friend, I should have known better how to defend him", said Stalin, and put down the receiver. Pasternak tried to ring back but, not surprisingly, failed to get through to the leader. The episode evidently preyed deeply upon him. He repeated to me the version I have just recounted on at least two later occasions, and told the story to other visitors, although, apparently, in different forms. His efforts to rescue Mandel'shtam, in particular his appeal to Bukharin, probably helped to preserve him at least for a time—Mandel'shtam was finally destroyed some years later—but Pasternak clearly felt, it may be without good reason, but as anyone not blinded by self-satisfaction or stupidity might feel, that perhaps another response might have done more for the condemned poet. (Akhmatova and Nadezhda Mandel'shtam agreed to give him four out of five for his behaviour in this case.)

He followed this story with accounts of other victims: Pil'nyak, who anxiously waited ("was constantly looking out of the window") for an emissary to ask him to sign a denunciation of one of the men accused of treason in 1936, and because none came, realized that he too was doomed. He spoke of the circumstances of Tsvetaeva's suicide in 1941, which he thought might have been prevented if the literary bureaucrats had not behaved with such appalling heartlessness to her. He told the story of a man who asked him to sign an open letter condemning Marshal Tukhachevsky. When Pasternak refused and explained the reasons for his refusal, the man burst into tears, said that the poet was the noblest and most saintly human being whom he had ever met, embraced him fervently; and then went straight to the secret police, and denounced him. Pasternak went on to say that despite the positive role which the Communist Party had played during the war, and not in Russia alone, he found the idea of any kind of relationship with it increasingly repellent: Russia was a galley, a slave-ship, and the Party men were the overseers who whipped the rowers. Why, he wished to know, did a British Commonwealth diplomat then in Moscow, whom I barely knew, a man who knew some Russian and claimed to be a poet, and visited him occasionally, why did this person insist, on every possible and impossible occasion, that he, Pasternak, should get closer to the Party? He did not need gentlemen who came from the other side of the world to tell him what to do—could I tell the man that his visits were unwelcome? I promised that I would, but did not do so, partly for fear of rendering Pasternak's none too secure position still more precarious.

Pasternak reproached me, too; not, indeed, for seeking to impose my political or any other opinions on him—but for something that to him seemed almost as bad: here we both were, in Russia, and wherever one looked, everything was disgusting, appalling, an abominable pigsty, yet I seemed to be positively exhilarated by it: "You wander about", he said, "and look at everything with bemused eyes"—I was no better (he declared) than other foreign visitors who saw nothing, and suffered from absurd delusions, maddening to the poor, miserable natives.

Pasternak was acutely sensitive to the charge of accommodating himself to the demands of the Party or the state—he seemed afraid that his mere survival might be attributed to some unworthy effort to placate the authorities, some squalid compromise of his integrity to escape persecution. He kept returning to this point, and went to absurd lengths to deny that he was capable of conduct of which no one who knew him could begin to conceive him to be guilty.

Drawing of Anna Akhmatova, 1943

One day he asked me whether I had heard anyone speak of his wartime volume of poems *On Early Trains* as a gesture of conformity with the prevailing orthodoxy. I said truthfully that I had not heard this, that it was an absurd suggestion. Anna Akhmatova, who was bound to him by the deepest friendship and admiration, told me that, at the end of the war, when she was returning from Tashkent, to which she had been evacuated from Leningrad, she stopped in Moscow and visited Peredelkino. Within a few hours of arriving she received a message from Pasternak that he could not see her—he had a fever, he was in bed—it was impossible. On the next day the message was repeated. On the third day he appeared before her looking unusually well, with no trace of ailment. The first thing he did was to ask her whether she had read this, the latest book of his poems. He put the question with so painful an expression on his face that she tactfully said that she had not, not yet; at which his face cleared, he looked vastly relieved, and they talked happily. He evidently felt ashamed, needlessly, of these poems. It seemed to him a kind of half-hearted effort to write civic poetry—there was nothing he disliked more intensely than this genre.

Yet, in 1945, he still had hopes of a great renewal of Russian life as a result of the cleansing storm that the war had seemed to him to be—a storm as transforming, in its own terrible fashion, as the Revolution itself, a vast cataclysm beyond our puny moral categories. Such vast mutations cannot, he held, be judged. One must think and think about them, and seek to understand as much of them as one can, all one's life; they are beyond good and evil, acceptance or rejection, doubt or assent; they must be accepted as elemental changes, earthquakes, tidal waves, transforming events, which are beyond all ethical and historical categories. So, too, the dark nightmare of betrayals, purges, massacres of the innocents, followed by an appalling war, seemed to him a necessary prelude to some inevitable, unheard-of victory of the spirit.

I did not see him again for eleven years. By 1956 his estrangement from his country's political establishment was complete. He could not speak of it, or its representatives, without a shudder. By that time his friend Olga Ivinskaya had been arrested, interrogated, ill-treated, sent to a labour camp for five years. "Your Boris," Minister of State Security, kumov, had said to her, "Boris detests us, doesn't he" "They were right", Pa said: "she could not and did deny it."

I had travelled to Peredelkino with Neuhaus and one of his sons by his first wife, who was now married to Pasternak. He repeated over and over again that Pasternak was a saint: that he was too unworldly his hope that the Soviet authorities would permit the publication of *Doctor Zhivago* was plainly —martyrdom of the author was more likely. Pasternak was the greatest writer produced by for decades, and he would be destroyed, as so many had been destroyed, by the state. This was an inheritance from the Tsarist Whatever the differences the old and the new R suspicion and persecution of and artists were common to both Neuhaus's former wife now Pasternak's wife—had told that Pasternak was determined get his novel published somehow. He had tried to dissuade him his words were in vain. If Pasternak mentioned the matter to me, I—it was important—more than portant—perhaps a matter of life and death, who could tell, in these days?—would I try to suade him to hold his hand? Neuhaus seemed to me to be right: Pasternak probably did need to be physically saved from himself.

By this time we had arrived at Pasternak's house. He was waiting for us by the gate and let Neuhaus go in, embraced me warmly and said that in the eleven years during which we had not met, much had happened, most of it very evil. He stopped and added, "Surely there is something you want to say to me?" I said, with monumental tactlessness (not to say unforgivable stupidity), "Boris Leonidovich, I am happy to see you looking so well. But the main thing is that you have survived. This seemed almost miraculous to some of us" (I was thinking of the anti-Jewish persecution of Stalin's last years). His face darkened and he looked at me with real anger: "I know what you are thinking", he said. "What am I thinking, Boris Leonidovich?" "I know, I know it, I know what is in your mind", he replied in a breaking voice—it was frightening—"do not prevaricate, I can see more clearly into your mind than I can into my own." "What am I thinking?" I asked again, more and more disturbed by his words. "You think—I know that you think—that I have done something for *them*." "I assure you, Boris Leonidovich", I replied, "that I never conceived of this—I have never heard this suggested by anyone, even as an idiotic [illegible]." In the end he seemed to believe me. But he was visibly upset. Only after I had assured him that admiration for him, not only as a writer, but as a free and independent human being, was, among civilized people, world-wide, did he begin to return to his normal state. "At least", he said, "I can say, like Heine, 'I may not deserve to be remembered as a poet, but surely as a soldier in the battle for human freedom'."

He took me to his study. There he thrust a thick envelope into my hands: "My book", he said, "it's all there. It is my last word. Please read it." I read *Doctor Zhivago* during the following night and day, and when I saw him again, I asked what he intended to do with it. He told me that he had given it to an Italian communist, who worked in the Italian Section of the Soviet radio, and at the same time was acting as an agent for the Communist Italian publisher Feltrinelli. He had assigned world rights to Feltrinelli. He wished his novel, his testament, the most authentic, most complete of all his writings—his poetry was nothing in comparison (although the poems in the book were, he thought, perhaps the best he had written)—he wished his work to travel over the entire world, to lay waste with fire (he quoted Pushkin's famous biblical lines), to lay waste the hearts of men.

After the midday meal was over, his wife, Zinaida Nikolaevna, drew me aside and begged me with tears in her eyes to dissuade him from getting *Doctor Zhivago* published abroad. She did not wish her children to suffer; surely I knew what "they" were capable of. Moved by this plea, I spoke to the poet at the first opportunity. I omised to have microfilms of novel made, to bury them in four quarters of the globe, to y copies in Oxford, in Valpa- o, in Tasmania, Cape Town, i, Vancouver, Japan, so that les might survive even if a lear war broke out—was he olved to defy the Soviet authori- had he considered the conse- ces?

r the second time during that k he showed a touch of real r in talking to me. He told me t what I said was no doubt well ntioned, that he was touched my concern for his own safety that of his family (this was a trifle ironically), but that he what he was doing: that I worse than that importunate onwealth diplomat eleven rs ago. He had spoken to his ns. They were prepared to suffer. was not to mention the matter in. I had read the book, surely I lized what it, above all its dis- mination, meant to him. I was ned into silence.

After an interval, we talked t French literature, as often ore. Since our last meeting he procured Sartre's *La Nausée*, nd found it unreadable, and its cenity revolting. Surely after ur centuries of creative genius is great nation could not have ced to generate literature? Ara- n was a time-server, Duhamel, ehenno, were inconceivably ious; was Malraux still writ- g? Before I could reply, one of his ests, a gentle, silent woman, a cher who had recently returned er fifteen years in a labour p, to which she had been con- ned solely for teaching lish, shyly asked whether lous Huxley had written any- ing since *Point Counter Point*. Virginia Woolf still writing? had never seen a book by her, from an account in an old ch newspaper which in some rious fashion had found its into her camp, she thought she might like her work.

It is difficult to convey the plea- of being able to bring news of and literature of the outer ld to human beings so uinely eager to receive it, an ikely to obtain it from any er source. I told her and the mbled company all that I could English, American, French writ- It was like speaking to the s of shipwreck on a desert d, cut off for decades from lization. All they heard, they ived as new, exciting and tful. The Georgian poet Tit- Tabidze, Pasternak's great d, had perished in the Great e. His widow, Nina Tabidze, was present, wanted to know er Shakespeare, Ibsen and w were still great names in the tern theatre. I told her that est in Shaw had declined, but Chekhov was greatly admired often performed, and added t Akhmatova had said to me she could not understand worship of Chekhov. His ld was uniformly drab. The never shone. No swords ed. Everything was covered by rrible grey mist. Chekhov's erse was a sea of mud with tched human creatures caught it helplessly. It was a travesty of e (I once heard Yeats express a lar sentiment: "Chekhov ws nothing of life and death", said; "he does not know that floor of heaven is full of the nd of the clashing of swords"). ternak said that Akhmatova was lly mistaken. "Tell her when see her—we cannot go to Len- freely, as you probably —tell her from all of us that all Russian writers ach to the reader: even Tur- ev tells him that time is a great ler and that kind of thing; ov alone does not. He is a artist—everything is dissolved art—he is our answer to Flau-" He went on to say that Akh- ova would surely talk to me t Dostoevsky and attack Tol-. But Tolstoy was right about oevsky, that his novels were a ful mess, a mixture of chau- n and hysterical religion: ell Anna Andreevna that, and m me!". But when I saw matova again, in Oxford 1965, I thought it best to report his judgment: she have wished to answer him. Pasternak was in his grave. In , she did speak to me of Dos- sky with the most passionate iration.

III

this brings me to my meeting the poet Anna Akhmatova; I been introduced to her poems by Maurice Bowra, and longed to meet her. In November, 1945, I went from Moscow to Leningrad. I had not seen the city since 1919, when I was ten years old, and my family was allowed to return to our native city of Riga, the capital of a then independent republic. In Leningrad my recollections of childhood became fabulously vivid. I was inexpressibly moved by the look of the streets, the houses, the statues, the embankments, the marketplaces, the suddenly familiar, still broken, railings of a little shop, in which samovars were mended, below the house in which we had lived. The inner yard of the house looked as sordid and abandoned as it had done during the first years of the Revolution. My memories of specific events, episodes, experiences, came between me and the physical reality. It was as if I had walked into a legendary city, myself at once part of the vivid, half-remembered legend, and yet, at the same time, viewing it from some outside vantage-point.

The city had been greatly damaged, but still in 1945 remained indescribably beautiful (it seemed wholly restored by the time I saw it again, eleven years later). I made my way to the Writers' Bookshop in the Nevsky Prospekt. While looking at the books, I fell into casual conversation with a man who was turning over the leaves of a book of poems. He turned out to be a well-known critic and literary historian. We talked about recent events. He described the terrible ordeal of the siege of Leningrad and the martyrdom and heroism of many of its inhabitants, and said that some had died of cold and hunger, others, mostly the younger ones, had survived. Some had been evacuated. I asked him about the fate of writers in Leningrad. He said, "You mean Zoshchenko and Akhmatova?" Akhmatova to me was a figure from a remote past. Maurice Bowra, who had translated some of her poems, spoke about her to me as someone not heard of since the First World War. "Is Akhmatova still alive?" I asked. "Akhmatova, Anna Andreevna?" he said: "Why yes, of course. She lives not far from here on the Fontanka, in Fontanny Dom [Fountain House]; would you like to meet her?" It was as if I had suddenly been invited to meet Miss Christina Rossetti. I could hardly speak. I mumbled that I should indeed like to meet her. "I shall telephone her", my new acquaintance said. He returned to tell me that she would receive us at three that afternoon. I was to return to the bookshop, and we would go together.

I returned at the appointed hour. The critic and I left the bookshop, turned left, crossed the Anichkov Bridge, and turned left again, along the embankment of the Fontanka. Fountain House, the palace of the Sheremetevs, is a magnificent late baroque building, with gates of exquisite ironwork for which Leningrad is famous, and built around a spacious court—not unlike the quadrangle of a large Oxford or Cambridge college. We climbed up one of the steep, dark staircases to an upper floor, and were admitted to Akhmatova's room. It was very barely furnished—virtually everything in it had, I gathered, been taken away—looted or sold—during the siege. There was a small table, three or four chairs, a wooden chest, a sofa and, above the unlit stove, a drawing by Modigliani. A stately, grey-haired lady, a white shawl draped about her shoulders, slowly rose to greet us.

Anna Andreevna Akhmatova was immensely dignified, with unhurried gestures, a noble head, beautiful, somewhat severe features, and an expression of immense sadness. I bowed. It seemed appropriate, for she looked and moved like a tragic queen. I thanked her for receiving me, and said that people in the West would be glad to know that she was in good health, for nothing had been heard of her for many years. "Oh, but an article on me has appeared in the *Dublin Review*", she said, "and a thesis is being written about my work, I am told, in Bologna." She had a friend with her, an academic lady of some sort, and there was polite conversation for some minutes. Then Akhmatova asked me about the ordeal of London during the bombing. I answered as best I could, feeling acutely shy and constricted by her distant, somewhat regal manner. Suddenly I heard what sounded like my first name being shouted somewhere outside. I ignored this for a while—it could only be an illusion—but the shouting became louder and the word "Isaiah" could be clearly heard. I went to the window and looked out, and saw a man whom I recognized as Randolph Churchill. He was standing in the middle of the great court, looking like a tipsy undergraduate, and screaming my name. I stood rooted to the floor for some seconds. Then I collected myself, muttered an apology and ran down the stairs. My only thought was to prevent Churchill from coming to the room. My companion, the critic, ran after me anxiously. When we emerged into the court, Churchill came towards me and greeted me effusively. "Mr X", I said mechanically, "I do not suppose that you have met Mr Randolph Churchill?" The critic froze, his expression changed from bewilderment to horror, and he left as rapidly as he could. I have no notion whether I was followed by agents of the secret police, but there could be no doubt that Randolph Churchill was. It was this untoward event that caused absurd rumours to circulate in Leningrad that a foreign delegation had arrived to persuade Akhmatova to leave Russia; that Winston Churchill, a life-long admirer of the poet, was sending a special aircraft to take Akhmatova to England, and so on.

Boris Pasternak

Randolph, whom I had not met since we were undergraduates at Oxford, subsequently explained that he was in Moscow as a journalist on behalf of the North American Newspaper Alliance. He had come to Leningrad as part of his assignment. On arriving at the Hotel Astoria, his first concern had been to get the pot of caviar which he had acquired into an ice-box: but, as he knew no Russian, and his interpreter had disappeared, his cries for help had finally brought down a representative of the British Council. She saw to his caviar and, in the course of general conversation, told him that I was in the city. He said that I might make an excellent substitute interpreter, and unfortunately discovered from the British Council lady where I was to be found. The rest followed. When he reached Fountain House, he adopted a method which had served him well during his days in Christ Church (this Oxford college), and, I dare say, on other occasions: "and", he said with a winning smile, "it worked". I detached myself from him as quickly as I could, and, after obtaining her number from the bookseller, telephoned Akhmatova to offer an explanation of my precipitate departure, and to apologize for it. I asked if I might be allowed to call on her again. "I shall wait for you at nine this evening", she answered.

When I returned, a learned lady, an Assyriologist, was also present and asked me a great many questions about English universities and their organization. Akhmatova was plainly uninterested and, for the most part, silent. Shortly before midnight the Assyriologist left, and then Akhmatova began to ask me about old friends who had emigrated—some of whom I might know. (She was sure of that, she told me later. In personal relationships, she assured me, her intuition—almost second sight—never failed her.) I did indeed know some of them. We talked about the composer Artur Lurié, whom I had met in America during the war. He had been an intimate friend of hers, and had set to music some of her, and of Mandel'shtam's, poetry. She asked about Boris Anrep, the mosaicist (whom I had never met); I knew little about him, only that he had decorated the floor of the entrance hall of the National Gallery in London with the figures of celebrated persons—Bertrand Russell, Virginia Woolf, Greta Garbo, Clive Bell, Lydia Lopokhova and the like. Twenty years later I was able to tell her that an image of herself had been added to them by Anrep. She showed me a ring with a black stone which Anrep had given her in 1917. She had, she said, met only one foreigner—a Pole—since the First World War. She asked after various other friends—Salomé Andronikova, to whom Mandel'shtam dedicated one of his most famous poems; Stravinsky's wife, Vera; the poets Vyacheslav Ivanov and Georgy Adamovich.

I answered as best I could. She spoke of her visits to Paris before the First World War, of her friendship with Amedeo Modigliani, whose drawing of her hung over the fireplace—one of many (the rest had perished during the siege). She described her childhood on the shores of the Black Sea, a pagan, unbaptized land she called it, where one felt close to an ancient, half-Greek, half-barbarian, deeply un-Russian, culture. She spoke of her first husband, the celebrated poet Gumilev. She was convinced that he had not taken part in the monarchist conspiracy for which he had been executed; Gorky, who had been asked by many writers to intervene on his behalf, apparently did nothing to save him. She had not seen him for some time before his condemnation—they had been divorced some years before. Her eyes had tears in them when she described the harrowing circumstances of his death.

After a silence, she asked me whether I would like to hear her poetry. But before doing this, she said that she wished to recite two cantos from Byron's *Don Juan* to me, for they were relevant to what would follow. Even if I had known the poem well, I could not have told which cantos she had chosen, for although she read English fairly freely, her pronunciation of it made it impossible to understand more than a word or two. She closed her eyes and spoke the lines from memory, with intense emotion. I rose and looked out of the window to conceal my embarrassment. Perhaps, I thought afterwards, that is how we now read classical Greek and Latin. Yet we, too, are moved by the words, which, as we pronounce them, might have been wholly unintelligible to their authors and audiences. Then she read from her books of poems—*Anno Domini*, *The White Flock*, *Out of Six Books*—"Poems like these, but far better than mine", she said, "were the cause of the death of the best poet of our time, whom I loved and who loved me..."—whether she meant Gumilev or Mandel'shtam I could not tell, for she broke down in tears, and could not go on reading. There are recordings of her readings, and I shall not attempt to describe them. She read the (at that time still unfinished) *Poem Without a Hero*. I realized even then that I was listening to a work of genius. I do not suppose that I understood that many-faceted and most magical poem and its deeply personal allusions any better than when I read it now. She made no secret of the fact that it was intended as a kind of final memorial to her life as a poet, to the past of the city—St Petersburg—which was part of her being, and, in the form of a Twelfth-night carnival procession of masked figures *en travesti*, to her friends, and to their lives and destinies and her own—a kind of artistic *nunc dimittis* before the inescapable end which would not be long in coming. It is a mysterious and deeply evocative work: a tumulus of learned commentary is inexorably rising over it. Soon it may be buried under its weight.

Then she read the *Requiem*, from a manuscript. She broke off and spoke of the years 1937-38, when both her husband and her son had been arrested and sent to prison camps (this was to happen again), of the queues of women who waited day and night, week after week, month after month, for news of their husbands, brothers, fathers, sons, for permission to send food or letters to them. No news ever came. No messages ever reached them. A pall of death in life hung over the cities of the Soviet Union, while the torture and slaughter of millions of innocents were going on. She spoke in a dry, matter-of-fact voice, occasionally interrupting herself with "No, I cannot, it is no good, you come from a society of human beings, whereas here we are divided into human beings and . . .". Then a long silence: "And even now . . .". She would once more be silent. I asked about Mandel'shtam: she paused, her eyes filled with tears, and she begged me not to speak of him: "After he slapped Aleksey Tolstoy's face, it was all over . . .". It took some time for her to collect herself. Then in a totally changed voice, she said "Aleksey Tolstoy wore lilac shirts *à la russe* when we were in Tashkent. He spoke of the marvellous time he and I would have together when we came back. He was a very gifted and interesting writer, a scoundrel, full of charm, and a man of stormy temperament. He is dead now. He was capable of anything, anything. He was a wild adventurer. He only liked youth, power, vitality. He didn't finish his *Peter the First* because he said that he could only deal with Peter as a young man; what was he to do with all those people when they grew old? He was a kind of Dolokhov. He called me Annushka. That made me wince, but I liked him very much, even though he was the cause of the death of the best poet of our time, whom I loved and who loved me" (her words were identical with those she had used earlier: it now seemed clear to me to whom, on both occasions, she was referring).

It was, I think, by now about three in the morning. She showed no sign of wishing me to leave; and I was far too moved and absorbed to stir. She left the room and came back with a dish of boiled potatoes. It was all she had, and she was embarrassed at the poverty of her hospitality. I begged her to let me write down the *Poem Without a Hero* and *Requiem*: she said there was no need for that. A volume of her collected verse was due to appear the next February. It was all in proof. She would send me a copy. The Party, as we know, ruled otherwise. She was denounced by Zhdanov (in a phrase which he had not invented) as "half nun, half harlot". This put her beyond the official pale.

We talked about Russian literature. After dismissing Chekhov because of the absence in his world of heroism and martyrdom, of depth and darkness and sublimity, we talked about *Anna Karenina*. "Why

did Tolstoy make her commit suicide? As soon as she leaves Karenin, everything changes. She suddenly turns into a fallen woman, a *traviata*, a prostitute. Of course there are pages of genius, but the basic morality is disgusting. Who punishes Anna? God? No, not God—society—that same society whose hypocrisies Tolstoy is constantly denouncing. In the end he tells us that Anna repels even Vronsky. Tolstoy is lying. He knew better than that. The morality of *Anna Karenina* is the morality of Tolstoy's Moscow aunts, of philistine conventions. It is all connected with his personal vicissitudes. When Tolstoy was happily married he wrote *War and Peace*, which celebrates the family. After he started being Sophia Andreevna, but could not divorce her, because divorce is condemned by society, and may be by the peasants too, he wrote Anna *Karenina*, and punished Anna for leaving her husband. When he was old, and felt guilt for still lusting violently after peasant girls, he wrote *The Kreutzer Sonata* and forbade sex altogether."

These were her words: I do not know how seriously they were meant, but Akhmatova's dislike of Tolstoy's sermons was genuine—she regarded him as a mixture of vanity, and an enemy of freedom. She worshipped Dostoevsky and, like him, despised Turgenev. And, after Dostoevsky, Kafka, whom she read in English translations ("He wrote for me and about me", she told me years afterwards in Oxford —"Kafka is a greater writer than even Joyce and Eliot. He did not understand everything: only Pushkin did that"). She spoke to me about Pushkin's *Bronzovy Vsadnik*, and about the pale stranger in that story who improvised verse on themes supplied by the audience. The virtuoso, in her opinion, was the Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz. Pushkin's relation to him became ambivalent. The Polish issue divided them. But Pushkin always recognized genius in his contemporaries. Blok was like that—with his mad eyes and marvellous genius, he no could have been an improvisatore. She said that Blok had never liked her, but that every schoolmistress in Russia believed, and would doubtless go on believing, that they had had a love affair. Historians of literature believed this too. All this, in her opinion, was based on the poem *A Visit to the Poet*, dedicated to Blok; and, perhaps, also on the poem on the death of *The Green-Eyed King*, although that was written more than ten years before Blok died. Blok liked none of the Acmeists, of whom she was one. He did not like Pasternak either.

She then spoke about Pasternak, whom she loved deeply, though she had never been in love with him. After Mandel'shtam's and Tsvetoyeve's deaths, they were alone. The knowledge that no other was alive and at work was a source of ineffable comfort to both of them. They criticized each other freely, but followed no one else in this. The passionate devotion of countless men and women in the Soviet Union who knew their verse by heart, and copied it and circulated it, was a source of pride to them. But they both remained in exile. The thought of emigration was hateful to both. They longed to visit the West, but not if it meant that they would be unable to return. Their deep patriotism was not tinged by nationalism. Akhmatova was not prepared to move. No matter what horrors might be in store, she would never abandon Russia.

She spoke of her childhood, her marriages, her relationships with others, of the rich artistic life in Petersburg before the First World War. She had no doubt that the culture of the West, especially now, in 1945, was far superior to it. She spoke about the great poet Annensky, who had taught her more even than Gumilev, and died largely ignored by editors and critics, a great forgotten master. She spoke about her loneliness and isolation. Leningrad, after the war, was for her nothing but the graveyard of her friends—it was like the aftermath of a forest fire, the few charred trees made the desolation still more desolate. She lived by translating. She had begged to be allowed to translate the letters of Rilke, not those of Romain Rolland. After unheard-of obstacles, permission was finally granted. I asked her what the Renaissance meant to her—was it a real historical past, or an idealized vision, an imaginary world? She replied that it was the latter. She felt nostalgia for it—that longing for a universal culture of which Mandel'shtam had spoken, as Goethe and Schlegel had thought of it—a longing for what had been transmuted into art and thought—adventure, love, death, despair and martyrdom—a reality which had an history, nothing outside itself. She spoke in a calm, even voice, like a remote princess in exile, proud, unhappy, unapproachable, often in words of the most moving eloquence.

The account of the unrelieved tragedy of her life went beyond anything which anyone had ever described to me in spoken words: the recollection of them is still vivid and painful in me. I asked her whether she intended to compose a record of her literary life. She replied that her poetry was that, in particular the *Poem Without a Hero*, which she read to me again.

I did not see her on my next visit to the Soviet Union in 1956. Her son, who had been rearrested, had been released from his prison camp earlier that year, and Pasternak told me that she felt acutely nervous about seeing foreigners except by official order, but that she wished me to telephone her; this was far safer, for all her telephone conversations were monitored. Over the telephone she told me something of her experiences as a condemned writer; of the turning away by some whom she had considered faithful friends, of the nobility and courage of others. She had reread Chekhov, and said that at least in Word *No 6* he had accurately described her situation, and that of many others. Meanwhile her translations from the classical Korean verse had been published—"You can imagine how much Korean I know; it is a selection; not selected by me." There is no need for you to read it."

When we met in Oxford in 1965 Akhmatova told me that Stalin had been personally enraged by the fact that she had allowed me to visit her: "So our nun now receives visits from foreign spies", he is alleged to have remarked, and followed this with obscenities which she could not at first bring herself to repeat to me. The fact that I had never worked in any intelligence organization was irrelevant. All members of foreign missions were spies to Stalin. Of course, she said, the old man was by then out of his mind, in the grip of paranoical obsession. In Oxford she told me that she was convinced that Stalin's fury, which we had caused, had unleashed the Cold War—that she and I had changed the history of mankind. She meant this quite literally and insisted on its truth. She saw herself and me as world-historical personages chosen by destiny to play our fateful parts in a cosmic conflict, and this is reflected in her poems of this time. It was intrinsic to her entire historico-philosophical vision, from which much of her poetry flowed.

She told me that after her journey to Italy in the previous year, when she had been awarded a literary prize, she was visited by officials of the Soviet secret police, who asked her for her impressions of Rome. She replied that Rome seemed to her to be a city where paganism was still at war with Christianity. "What war?" she was asked: "Was the USA mentioned?" Are Russian émigrés involved?" What should she answer when similar questions were put to her about England and Oxford? For in Russia she would return no matter what awaited her there. The Soviet regime was the established order of her country. With it she had lived, and with it she would die. That is what being a Russian meant.

We returned to Russian poetry. She spoke contemptuously of well-known young poets, favoured by the Soviet authorities. One of the most famous of these, who was in England at the time, had sent her a telegram to Oxford to congratulate her on her honorary doctorate. I was there when it arrived. She read it, and angrily threw it in the waste-paper basket—"They are all little bandits, prostitutes of their gifts, and exploiters of public taste. Mayakovsky's influence has been fatal to them all. Mayakovsky shouted at the top of his voice because it was natural in him to do so. He could not help it. His imitators have adopted his manner as a genre. They are vulgar declaimers with not a spark of true poetry in them. There are marvellous young poets, unpublished, of course, but their names would mean nothing to you. They will eclipse us all. Pasternak and I and Mandel'shtam and Tsvetaeva, we stand at the end of a long period of elaboration which began in the nineteenth century. These new poets constitute a new beginning. They are behind bars now, but they will astonish the world." She said that this generation of Russians was more sensitive to poetry than her own had been—who cared, who truly cared in 1910 about Blok, Bely or Vyacheslav Ivanov, or about herself and the poets of her group? Today it was very different. Ordinary people wrote to her, and in Pasternak. He was a divine poet, one of the great poets of the Russian land. Every sentence he wrote, in verse or prose, spoke with his authentic voice, unlike any that anyone had ever heard before.

Like many poets, Pasternak had little sense of the quality of others—he often picked inferior critics and discovered imaginary children death by his literary enemies. These beliefs had no foundation in fact—they were intuitive, but they were nevertheless, not sheer fantasies; they elements in a coherent vision of her own and her nation's fate, of the central importance Pasternak had wanted to share with Stalin, the vision of a ruined and shaped human world and her art. She was a visionary; she had, for all her support, a strong sense of reality, described the literary scene in Petersburg before the First World War, and he was right, with a sober realism and keenness of detail which made it credible.

Akhmatova lived in Leningrad during which, according to Nadezhda Mandel'shtam, she lived with heroism. She was not in public, nor indeed in private, utter a single word against the Soviet regime. But her life was what Herzen once called Russian literature is a continuous indictment of Russian reality.

The worship of her poetry in the Soviet Union today, not only but widespread, has, so far as I know, no parallel. Her quiet but passive resistance to what she regarded as unworthy of her art and herself, transformed into a figure (as Bellinsky once spoke about Herzen) not merely of Russian literature, but of the Russian history of our time.

My meetings and conversations with Boris Pasternak in Akhmatova; my reflections on the conditions, scarcely distinguishable under which they lived and worked, and of the treatment to which they were subjected, and the spirit in which they met it; my knowledge of the treatment of their friends, of the prison camps, of the hatred, insult, contempt, misunderstanding, persecution she could bear, but not sympathy if it was mingled with compassion. Her pride and dignity were very great.

The detachment and impersonality with which she seemed to speak only partially disguised her passionate convictions and moral judgments, against which there was plainly no appeal. Her accounts of personalities and lives were compounded of sharp insight into the moral centre of characters and situations (she did not spare her friends in this respect) together with a fixed ideal, from which she could not be moved. She knew that our meeting had had serious historical consequences. She knew that the poet Georgii Ivanov, whom she accused of having written lying memoirs after he emigrated, had at one time been a police spy in the pay of the Tsarist government. She knew that the poet Nekrasov in the nineteenth century had also been a government agent; that the poet Annensky had been hounded to death by his literary enemies.

Looking back to Antiquity

By Cyril Mango

KURT WEITZMANN:
Byzantine Book Illumination and Ivories
503pp. Variorum Reprints. £65.
0 86078 058 X

Some scholars fly like bees from flower to flower; others march steadfastly in a single direction. Professor Kurt Weitzmann belongs to the second kind. As a young man in Berlin he seems to have decided exactly what he wanted to do, and he pursued this same course for the next fifty years. Even his move to the United States in 1938 did not suggest to him a different approach or a different set of problems. He ceased, for the most part, writing in German and began writing in English, but it must be admitted that his German and his English are practically interchangeable.

Weitzmann's field of study has been the Byzantine minor arts. He started with ivories, went on to illuminated manuscripts (which have become his main preoccupation) and, finally, added icons to his repertoire. In each of these subjects he has published monumental works of description and classification. It cannot be said, however, that his primary concern has been with the objects themselves, their technique or their aesthetic quality. His real interest—so interest characteristic of the early years of this century—lies in iconography: not iconography per se, i.e. as a language of symbols, but as a tool for reconstructing lost recensions of illustrated works so as to reach back to the very beginnings of Christian art and, occasionally, even to pagan antiquity, much in the same way that the philologist reconstructs an ancient text on the basis of relatively late copies.

The method he has developed for so doing is most fully set out in his *Illustrations in Roll and Codex* (1947) and involves a number of presuppositions which I would venture to summarize as follows: (a) That the illustrated manuscript was the main carrier of pictorial formulas; (b) That the Early Christian and the Byzantine artist did not invent a new composition if he could copy an old one, but was occasionally forced by a change of format to rearrange a composition; (c) That the most important change of format occurred when the papyrus roll was supplanted by the codex; (d) That if a picture is not explainable by the accompanying text, it must be assumed that it was invented for a different text which necessitated more fully for all of its particulars.

The studies reprinted in this volume (to be followed by several more volumes) present a good cross-section of Weitzmann's scholarship. We are offered, first, two general surveys of the *Problematik* of Byzantine book illumination, then four articles devoted to specific questions posed by manuscripts (including an important piece on the Cotton Genesis fragments), two articles dealing with ivories and, finally, a discussion of an iconographic theme, namely the Threnos, i.e. the Virgin's lamentation over the dead body of Christ.

To give a clearer notion of what Weitzmann has tried to do, we may glance at a study entitled "Illustrations for the Chronicles of Sozomenus, Theodoret and Malalas". The starting-point here is the famous manuscript, *Parisinus gr. 1630*, which dates from c 890, and contains a vast number of heterogeneous miniatures whose relevance to the text (the sermons of St Gregory Nazianzen) is not always apparent. Clearly, they have been culled from other sources, mainly biblical. Several pictures, however, relate to ecclesiastical events of the fourth century and to the story of the emperor Julian. Since they are not explained by Gregory's text, the question arises as to where they have been taken from. Applying his method, Weitzmann discovers that the iconographic peculiarities of the pictures can be elucidated from the stylistic of the fifth-century ecclesiastical historians Sozomen and Theodoret and that of the sixth-century chronicler Malalas. He therefore concludes that there once existed illustrated copies of all three texts, and that these were used, directly rather than indirectly, by the painter of the Paris Gregory. He supports his argument by pointing to the existence of other illustrated Byzantine chronicles (notably the Skylitzes of the National Library at Madrid), but omits to inform us that neither Sozomen nor Theodoret was a chronicler—they were ecclesiastical historians, a very different thing.

Weitzmann is clearly right on several counts. He is right to insist on the number of illustrated Byzantine manuscripts that have come down to us, especially those of the pre-Iconoclastic period, represent but a tiny proportion of what once existed. He is right in supposing that Byzantine pictorial art, when not merely iconic, is basically one of textual illustration, although it may be [illegible] whether the book rather than the icon or mural decoration was the most important medium. He is right in holding that [illegible] artists copied existing models more often than they invented anything new. It seems to me, however, that a rigid application of Weitzmannian method leads to conclusions that are [illegible] improbable and to procedures that may not be very rewarding. Following it to the end, one gets the impression that Byzantine painters were remarkably [illegible] professors of Art and Archaeology. Did they really spend their [illegible] seeking out models in rare books? Did they have a photographic archive at their disposal so that they could so obscure a subject as the blinding of Antaeus on which [illegible] the Virgin's Lament? And how could he show to everybody's satisfaction that there once existed an extremely illustrated copy of Sozomen and Theodoret, of Malalas and Josephus and a number of other authors, is the art historian's well spent in painstakingly piecing together a host of vanished prototypes, then studying such works as have survived in the context of a society that produced them?

Undoubtedly, students of Byzantine art owe a great debt to Professor Weitzmann. By his painstaking devotion he has laid before us a rich body of material, much of it new, which he has analysed with immense learning. In a field where so much more than his [illegible] of amateurs he has introduced a high standard of professionalism; his approach had been a trifle too rigid and his expository style, what more attractive, our gain would have been all the [illegible]

Adapting to the New World

By Jack P. Greene

AD W. TATE and DAVID L. ERMAN (Editors):
Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century
ays on Anglo-American Society
p. University of North Carolina
ss. $26.
978 1360 S

ring the first three quarters of eighteenth century, the inhabitants of Virginia took enormous de in its status as Britain's "most ortant American possession" and most extensive, richest and most ismanding colony in America". ring the American Revolution, it emed only natural, as contemraries from Georgia to New pshire acknowledged, that Virginians had assumed the leadership both the opposition to Britain d the creation of the new American nation. Virginia, reported the ousand French visitor La Rochefoucauld in the mid-1790s in regesting a common observation, was one of the first colonies to be part in the revolution: and one of the states made more rorous efforts, expended greater ants, or displayed more signal ergy, to accomplish that happy ject". Similarly, following the hievement of independence, when the American union seemed on the ge of collapse, Virginia again ok "a leading, active, and influential part in bringing about" a longer national government. Such generous attention . . . to the neral interest", exclaimed John y Burke, author of Virginia's most tensive post-independence history, "the beginning of the nineteenth century, "produced everywhere a timent of tender respect and just miration". How deep and widespread that sentiment ran was ly manifest in the election of ginians in eight of the first nine ndential terms under the new deral Constitution.

This astonishing contemporary appreciation of Virginia's pre-eminent ole in colonial and Revolutionary erica did not, however, persist ch beyond the Revolutionary generation. For a variety of complex asons, the colonial history of Virginia, its near neighbour Maryland, d the other southern colonies received relatively little attention in initial construction of an American national past during the nineenth century. The prolonged ainment of the southern states, ill 1865, to such a blatant and barrassing anomaly as chattel very marked them as deviant s, not central to, the emergence republican American society and the ubsequent cultural hegemony of the north-eastern states (which established almost all of the major ademic training institutions in history) virtually guaranteed that erican history would continue to be written with scant emphasis on the role of the southern colonies. Thad Tate explains in a masterly survey of the historiography of the seventeenth-century Chesapeake, which constitutes an introduction to the volume, the establishment of a new school of historical studies at the Johns Hopkins University in Maryland in the mid-1870s yielded, over the next forty years, several monographs on various aspects of the history of colonial Virginia and Maryland. Quantitatively, however, this lot has way equalled the output of studies of the northern colonies from coming out of the many new graduate departments of history in the area from Philadelphia north to Boston. Nor, despite publication of a few outstanding works by scholars such as Louis B. Wright and Wesley Frank Craven, did this situation change much over the following half-century.

Indeed, as Tate suggests, only during the past fifteen years has the study of the southern colonies in general and the Chesapeake colonies in particular proceeded at a pace that was anywhere nearly as intensive as that devoted to the Puritan colonies of New England for the first half century. This new interest in the colonial south is in part a natural extension of a powerful emergence of interest in America's social past to the years since the Second World War. Intimately linked to the establishment in Williamsburg, Virginia in the mid-1940s of the Institute of Early American History and Culture, the institution responsible for publication of the present work and many other important studies of British colonial America, this resurgence has pulled literally hundreds of young scholars from all over the world into the field, and, increasingly, sent them scurrying into relatively neglected areas, including the seventeenth-century Chesapeake, in quest of significant research subjects. Probably more important, the new concern with the colonial south has also been inspired by the shifting focus towards social history in early modern British and European historical studies over the past twenty-five years. Such a focus, as Tate points out, is far more congenial to the exploitation of surviving records for the southern colonies than was the preoccupation with intellectual history which dominated colonial American historiography for much of the period from the mid-1920s to the mid-1960s.

Whatever its sources, this new interest has resulted in, among other things, what Thad Tate and David Ammerman appropriately describe as a "remarkable renascence of interest in the seventeenth-century Chesapeake", a renascence which has already produced several notable books (in particular, Wesley Frank Craven's *White, Red, and Black: The Seventeenth-century Virginian* and Edmund S. Morgan's *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia*), and is now superbly represented by this volume. Composed of selected papers from a 1974 conference and a few commissioned pieces, the eight substantive contributions it contains both exemplify the kinds of sophisticated social history now being done on early modern Anglophone America and collectively provide a lucid portrait of the first century of social development in Britain's "most ancient" area of overseas settlement in the new world. Intended to "illuminate the most significant aspects of the development of Anglo-American society in the Chesapeake", the essays concentrate on four major subjects: immigration patterns, mortality and family affairs, socio-economic opportunity, and the political and cultural implications of the emergence of a predominantly native or creole population around the end of the seventeenth century.

In sharp contrast to New England, which was settled mostly by a massive influx of religious dissidents during the single decade of the 1630s, the Chesapeake colonies continued to attract large numbers of immigrants throughout the seventeenth century. An estimated 70 to 85 per cent were servants imported to meet an expanding demand for labour to produce tobacco, the principal staple of the Chesapeake. The young English scholar, James Horn, has traced several of the surviving lists of servants who left London, Bristol, and Liverpool at various periods during the seventeenth century to contribute an intelligent and highly useful analysis of the character of this emigration. What he finds, briefly, is that the servants were young (fifteen to twenty-four, a majority being between twenty and twenty-one and male (ranging from six to two and a half males for every female). Drawn from a broad cross-section of English society, about half of them were minors or unskilled workers, "while the rest came from agricultural occupations that defy any simple classification". Almost wholly people who had not yet acquired much stake in society, they come from a multitude of different places, mostly within a forty-mile radius of the port of embarkation. Perhaps because of the nature of his data, Horn puts heavy emphasis on push factors, including contraction of the agrarian labour market, decline of the cloth industry, personal tragedy (particularly the loss of parents), and harvest failure, at the expense of pull factors in the decision to emigrate.

He argues persuasively that emigration to America was simply an extension of internal English migratory patterns from villages and countryside into larger urban centres and suggests that the decision to leave the British Isles usually occurred not when a person left home but after he had arrived in London or elsewhere and found little opportunity. Along with his finding that Chesapeake emigrants differed no important respect from those who went as servants to other colonies, this suggestion places the migration to the Chesapeake squarely within the mainstream of population movements within England.

Horn's stress upon push factors may derive at least in part from his knowledge of the high mortality which awaited emigrants to the Chesapeake, the causes and effects of which are the subject of three pieces in this collection. In an ingenious contribution, Carville Earle, a historical geographer, offers the most compelling explanation yet advanced for the high death rate in Virginia during its first two decades of settlement. Finding that annual mortality fluctuated between 4 and 30 per cent according to whether the population was dispersed or concentrated in the vicinity of Virginia's principal settlement at Jamestown, Earle argues that it was not, as most earlier historians have contended, either starvation or an unfamiliar disease environment that primarily accounted for the heavy toll but Jamestown's situation in a "deadly estuarine zone" in which the annual summer invasion of salt water contaminated the water supply with salt, sediment, and faecal material containing pathogens of typhoid and dysentery that floated back and forth past Jamestown with the summer tide. Typhoid, dysentery, and salt poisoning, to be intimate, probably accounted for two-thirds of all deaths, and the subsequent redistribution of population on to higher land and to fresh water zones between 1624 and 1634 brought about a sharp improvement in mortality rates.

That this improvement was insufficient to bring mortality down even to metropolitan, much less to New England, levels is amply revealed by two suggestive case studies on the impact of high mortality upon patterns of family life, one by Lorena S. Walsh on Maryland and the other by Darrett B. and Anita H. Rutman on Middlesex County, Virginia. Already drastically limited by the disproportionate number of men to women among immigrants, families were deeply affected by frequent death of parents. In Maryland, half of all marriages had been broken by death within seven years, while in Middlesex a quarter of all children had lost one or both parents by the age of five, one half of them by thirteen, and three quarters by twenty-one. Parental death was such an integral part of the fabric of life that it was the norm for most children. Because men died younger than women, Walsh suggests, women "were accorded an unusually influential role in managing the estate and bringing up the children", while, as the Rutmans astutely observe, the omnipresence of death both accentuated the importance of extended kinship and quasi-kinship connections as refugee for orphaned children, and impelled fathers to set their sons up independently as soon as they reached their maturity. Indeed, with so many young children without natural parents in both colonies, parental control and sexual mores were weak, and autonomy and adaptability, not dependence and inflexibility, were the qualities prudent parents must have sought to encourage in their offspring.

The material prospects that awaited those who could survive in the Chesapeake is the subject of two further essays, one on Maryland by Lois Green Carr and Russell R. Menard and another on Surry County, Virginia, by Kevin P. Kelly. The more or less continuous expansion of the tobacco industry from 1617 to 1680 meant that not only free immigrants with capital but servants could do well in the rich soils surrounding the Chesapeake. Before 1660, indeed, surviving servants, especially those fortunate enough to acquire wives and families, often achieved substantial property, with a few even acquiring fortunes sufficient to attain membership in a nascent Chesapeake gentry. Opportunity declined somewhat over the next two decades and became even slimmer after 1680 as a result of a long-term depression in tobacco prices that persisted for three decades. Whereas servants arriving between 1660 and 1680 could still expect to become small, independent landholders and minor local office-holders, those who came after that date found themselves under the necessity of moving to less productive areas, such as Surry County, where they lived on small plots as tenants, single-parent households with little hope of acquiring families or substantial wealth, or out of the Chesapeake altogether to the newer colonies of the Carolinas, New Jersey, or Pennsylvania. The older Chesapeake settlements now became a funnel for immigrants into an expanding area of the North American coast.

Drawing upon his own research for Maryland and that of Martin H. Quitt for Virginia, David W. Jordan describes patterns of political life generally comparable to those that characterized the family. Given the low life expectancy and the immigration of many men with much political experience, office-holding at all levels was distinguished by considerable discontinuity, lack of sustained and qualified leadership, and the absence of a governing élite capable of perpetuating itself from one generation to another. Almost to the end of the century, a "continuing progression of relatively young men, almost exclusively first-generation settlers", presided over the politics of the Chesapeake with the "prolonged ascendancy of immigrants" constituting "the most striking feature" of its political life.

The picture that emerges of Britain's oldest region of American settlement during most of its first century is thus one of a largely immigrant society populated mostly by people who, having been in uneasy or tenuous circumstances at home, had taken the least informed migration to English cities and had then moved on to the Chesapeake, where the survivors among them often managed to improve their material and social status substantially. The incentive to the pieces in which they lived betrayed their desire to re-create in America something resembling the society they had left behind.

But the excess of men over women, late age of marriage, high death rates, heavy concentration upon producing tobacco on dispersed plantations, and rough equality among free people made it extremely difficult for them to replicate traditional patterns of English social, family, and political life. The editors and several of the contributors emphasize the "fragile character" of this society. But from the contents of this volume fragility would seem to be less descriptive than improvisational and contingent. For the single most powerful impression one takes away from these essays is of the resourcefulness and resilience of the Chesapeake's new inhabitants in adapting old habits and institutions to such profoundly different circumstances.

As many of the essays emphasize, the Chesapeake colonies lost much of their contingent character after 1675 when they gradually began to undergo a profound social transformation. As black slavery slowly began to displace servitude as the predominant form of labour between 1680 and 1720 and opportunity for new settlers to acquire land in older settled areas declined, immigration slowed. Simultaneously, improved life expectancy, a more equal sex ratio, and earlier marriages raised the birth rate. Together, these developments contributed to the emergence of a native-born majority at the end of the century, at the core of which was an increasingly wealthy slave and plantation-owning creole élite that was becoming ever more sharply differentiated from people of less wealth. Between 1690 and 1710, this élite both took control of politics and began to provide more continuous, sustained, and experienced leadership.

In a perceptive closing essay, Cecile Shammas explores the cultural effects of the emergence of a creole majority among the Virginia élite after 1690. The earlier, discontinuous immigrant élite had been primarily interested in making fortunes and returning to England as quickly as material circumstances would permit. Stung by metropolitan condescension and anxious about Virginia's almost wholly unsavoury reputation in England, the new creole élite self-consciously set about trying to make Virginia more recognizably English and threw themselves into its "improvement" through the creation of towns, a church, a public school, more responsive and active political institutions, and even a history, which provided Virginia with "a sense of permanence and legitimacy . . . it had never before possessed". By these and other actions, Shammas suggests, Virginia creoles manifested their commitment to the place of their nativity and finally provided some of the most essential foundations for the achievement of that proud sense of place and preeminence which, despite the Chesapeake's tenuous early history, Virginians displayed so fully to the admiration of their contemporaries during the late colonial and Revolutionary years.

Clean Sheets

Late on Sunday night
We turn out lights
Close doors, square off
The struggling ends
Of an untidy day
Unsatisfactory week.

And last thing
(Nearly forgotten)
I open a window
To bring in the washing.

The sheets hang
Between the roofs
Straight, white and clean
Like omens of a new
Beginning. Fine rain
Tingles on my wrist.
I haul the sheets
Damp and cold
Into my arms.

Vicki Feaver

Landscapes of the soul

By John Broadbent

JOHN BUNYAN :
The Poems
Edited by Graham Midgley
345p. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £20.
0 19 812734 0

An evangelist used to bring his slides of *Pilgrim's Progress* to show through my grandfather's magic lantern. The evangelist was awkward and seedy in our drawing-room, using our electricity, our projector; yet he had the passion and in their shiny wooden box the pictures. We were all Christian, not to say Puritan; but whereas in those grandparents, lensed in "the ways of truth", Bunyan was a remarkable thinker and his book a splendid lesson, to the evangelist *Pilgrim's Progress* was, I think, the image of life itself, and Bunyan the man he would be if the world allowed. The slides were gorgeous: Apollyon, green and magenta, scaly in the Valley of the Shadow; the masonry of Doubting Castle loomed, Giant Despair glowerod; even the Delectable Mountains, a little sabbatorian in atmosphere, glowed with sheep' wool and the wings of Shining Ones. In spite of our monotheism, the lantern projected on to the drawing-room well a dyalic world: each fee or sinner, wreathed in smokes or smoke, was balanced by a Faithful or Hopeful, Mr Standfast or Captain Greatheart.

It is this casting of spiritual allagory into the shape of a few familiar archetypes rooted in the secular soul that was Bunyan's genius. The conversations are a bore but the narrative structure of picaresque dream is itself like a magic lantern show: out go the lights, and here are the devils and the lives, dungeons, slough and hill of the inner life, all with permission to exist and be named. It is the structure of Dante and of *Alice* but the landscape of England and (as Graham Midgley indicates about some of the poems) the plot of English folklore.

Bunyan's poems are here splendidly printed, and Mr Midgley introduces them with comprehensive sympathy. It is a little awkward that the bibliographical details are separate for each poetic text, without a consolidated list; but this is the first complete edition of the poems based on proper bibliographical study—and on good judgment: the editor uses the earliest available edition of *One Thing is Needful* because in the 1683 edition Bunyan's verses seem to have been smoothed. *The Book for Boys and Girls*—Bunyan's *Divina Emblaina* as it was called later — became his most popular set of poems by far but was reduced in editions between 1701 and 1928. This edition, copied from 1686 (the first and only edition in Bunyan's lifetime), has the full complement but prints illustrations from 1724.

Bunyan's poems do not, though, persist as an *oeuvre*. In *Pilgrim's Progress* the archetypes only just survive suffocation by doctrine and

In the other allagories they go under. When they survive it is by a comic ferco, bonyed up on irrepressible human traits. We remember Mr Worldly Wiseman, not his refutation, just as in Herbert's "Quip" we remember "brave Glory puffing by/In silks that whistled, who but he?" But in the poems the archetypes and the comics have fallen away. We are left with the burden of discurive, the reiteration of a message.

It is not good news: "worthless silly I" sings Christina after vanquishing Apollyon. There is a dominant vocabulary of obligation: "duty", "must", "take heed", "circumspect", "learn to mond", "do not" all at one emblem in the Book for Boys and Girls. The intrusive *do* of "So his poor Soul doth faint away . . . Death doth still at him lay"—is not mere clumsiness but part of the assertion, like the ubiquitous let restriction: "let this sink down into thy heart". Bunyan presses on the past tense, asserting historicity as in the creed: "Condemn'd he was . . . Scourg'd with whips his precious body were . . . His head was crown'd"; and equally upon the future; so that the song Christiano heard in the grove, so familiar, can be a motto: His truth at all times firmly stood: And shall from age to Age endure. Hence, Here little, and hereafter Bliss, Is best from Age to Age.

It's obvious enough that the assertion of world-generating authority and the determent of gratification can lie on symptoms of the paranoid, whether puritan or political. Its effect is to leave a gap in the middle, in the here and now. This gap has to be filled with even more primeval law and order, and even more future riches.

The poems are riveted with quotations from the Bible, as if the mere mention of a pomegranate or a lamb will, like a concept quaked out of Mnrx, hold the world together in sense. So it will, for a time. Without theory, the puople perish. These were characteristics too of the spontaneous sermons uttered in the "meetings" I used to attend, characteristics of the evangelist with the slides. Like Bunyan, those men were using that channel to give them authority in a world that in other ways relegated them. Now even that is nearly gone. Ordinary people have no access to any world-myth, or to the media that carry it, except as consumers. There are no common preachers now, only broadcasters and journalists. Puritanism produced seems to remind us of the crisis of the media. Of course our media sometimes enrich their audience, and controversise although people of Bunyan's time had fuller access to their media: they were writing in circumstances that also produced Bedford gaol, the Boston pillory and the Act of Uniformity itself—which effectively silenced them.

One of the reasons why at different periods the media become oppressive is perhaps that we canpive at over-valuing "writing" and undervaluing insight, rhythm, song, speech. So in an early poem Bunyan can write:

Sweet Jesus though our sins to us be Light
That we can carry them with pleasure, yet
They made thee groan, and all thro' sorely fright.

Before the Spear with they heart Blood was wet.

But the tone is Herbert's, the margin cites three texts, and he continues the poem with their authority, not his own. There are flickers of autonomy in his poem on the Four Last Things. To have the theory with which to discuss the end of the world is politically powerful, and levelling. Who can say, Bunyan asks, from the shakings of fear that Death brings?

But how much more then when he comes
To graffle with thy Heart; comes
To bind with Thread thy Toes and Thumbs,
And fetch thee in his Cart.
And in Hell:
The floods run trickling down their face,
Their hearts do prick and ache,
While they lament their woful case,
Their loins tatter and shake.

Wet, graffle, tatter: It's not just that they "realize" for the reader the slippery spear, the heart attack, the frailty of terror; but the signal by their deviance which Bunyan *wanted* to write about what we could therefore share with him. . . .

Perhaps writing is lo pray, unsyclonic activity. But the poem seems to be in using writing, neurotic defence, a way of writing what you want to say.

What hast thou there, man?

Plumbs? How? Yes Sir, a Plum. I thought 'twas so, because you Thou didst them out the Page.

The Boy goes from, man. . . .

Which he counts better than . . . . . .

But by and by he to me opens. With mought but Paper and . . . .

How rich the poem is, on encounter between fullness need, youth and age, between and wants and food; but Bunyan won't stay in that here and now, must have eight lines of moralising about the transitoriness of worldly goods—much as that grandfather mine used to parade children evangelical missions in the garden with enormous cards so that children had painted letters, in the case of little girl and boy my little brother writing and this little girl spelt some theological word: GRACE, perhaps, or SAVIOUR, which he preached. But as we prunched behind them he noticed their heads, bodies and legs.

which his language does in fact, by a sort of highly controlled indeterminacy, invite the reader into the creative process, is perhaps as inscrutable as it is celebrated. For any author maintaining Simpson's thesis this must be a vital topic to explore. Yet since he describes the vicissitudes of poetic diction, which Wordsworth rejected, as lying in the treatment of words "as things in themselves unmodifying directly the 'things' they mean", something which involves the reader in secondary 'creative' activity which he tends to regard as a parallel to, or an enactment of, some similar process going on in the 'real' world around him". Wordsworth's own position is undermined. His language is left to serve "a humanistic method, but . . . an alinguistic one; as far as it can be without sinking into silence". No one will dispute that Wordsworth's linguistic effects are often achieved by indicating the limits of language; but it is a pity to extend this obvious truth to the point where it almost reverses its meaning, in the process of including the question on which all also depends. By ignoring it, Simpson continually risks confusing Wordsworth's careful cultivation of indeterminacy with vagueness, vacuncy and blank obscurity.

The truth is that the author's sulf appears unconvinced, as uncurvetous as to "produce meanings" for ourselves. The question is whether it does so by the means Simpson indicates.

In the broader discussions, the point often seems tantalizingly to disappear somewhere between the idea and the fact. It is part of his purpose, for instance, to show that the Romantics by and large turned away from metaphor, a highly suggestive and intriguing idea. If, however, one is going to apply the idea to Blake, one has to be very clear about what one means by metaphor.

If one decides to regard metaphor as a species of simile, or as containing an expressible hidden content (the view which underwrites Sir Geoffrey Keynes's extraordinary commentary on the Songs of *Innocence and of Experience*), one must not confuse this with the strict view of metaphor, reinforced by Wittgenstein and Donald Davidson, as of something without cognitive content; and this, in its turn, must be clearly distinguished from the simple belief that metaphor is confusing, merely emotive, and unsuited to serious discourse. If for Blake "optics was at the front of attention as a metaphor of limitation and geometrical abstraction", I think one should not be vague about how this relates to his defence of engraving as an art, his own illustrative genius in verbal and visual imagery, and so on.

Then Wordsworth: the way in

Putting in the meanings

By Iain McGilchrist

DAVID SIMPSON :
Irony and Authority in Romantic Poetry
267pp. Macmillan. £12.
0 333 259106

The theoretical startling-point for this book, most succinctly expressed ten pages before its close, is uncontentious. "English Romantic irony, broadly put, consists in the studied avoidance on the artist's part of determinate meanings, even at such times as he might wish to encourage his reader to produce such meanings for himself . . ." The purpose is to make the reader create for himself the experience embodied in the work of art. The method, according to David Simpson, is the poet's understanding of his own authority, and of the authority implied in the language he uses.

The cultivation of what Schiller rather irritably dubbed *das Subjektivische* is a commonplace of Romantic aesthetics, which permeates the writings of the Schlegels, Novalis, and the other German theorists, and is everywhere attested to by Romantic art in all its manifestations. This is not precisely Dr Simpson's topic, but it is the familiarity of this notion which lends an initial credibility to his thesis about verbal indeterminacy. To find out what the author has in mind, we must turn to his examples.

In practice Simpson concerns himself principally with the poetry of Blake, Wordsworth and Keats. His discussions raise many problems. First, they seem to lack any sense of what the author in question is actually like. A line of poetry is, for him, a strip of verbal material on which it is the critic's task to exercise his verbal ingenuity without reference to the whole—poem or *oeuvre*—out of which it is taken. His interpretations of the Grecian urn ode and of "La Belle Dame sans Merci" suggest a view of the way in which Keats thought and wrote, and of the experience of reading his poems, which one would have thought, familiarity with his subject would have precluded.

But they present other problems. Some of the readings are simply impossible. The use of "you" and "thou" in the Grecian urn ode, for example, make the author's discovery of "indeterminacy" in this not only unnecessary but untenable. In the "Belle Dame", the line "She looked at me as she did love" does not mean "she looked at me while she was loving"; nor does "sure" in "And sure in language strange she said,/I love thee true" mean "surely she did, didn't she?". When Shelley writes, "the stream of life, our back doth on its whirlpools

bour", this may be an infelicitous inversion of word order, but not of the laws of physics. When sense does not preclude such speculations, the principle of economy often does. We do not need to ponder whether the line "I met a lady in the meads" "touches on" the Middle English form of the verb "to dream" in order to reach the conclusion that the event lies "within the dream experience, that ambiguous realm where the question of the precisa medistion of subject and object is always problematic, perhaps even necessarily unanswerable". (In any case our *meets* is an impersonal intransitive.) And so the examples can be multiplied.

Perhaps more important than all this, can the search for verbal indeterminacy really demonstrate what the author wants it to? For every example of this kind of thing Simpson finds in the Romantics, there are two crying out in Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton or Metaugail. And even in Romantic poetry there is famously more than one type—and more than one cause—of ambiguity. The fundamental question is not whether one can find indeterminacy of expression in Romantic poetry, nor whether there are questions which may be asked of the text to which there is no precise answer. Of this there is an more doubt than that Romantic art stimulates us to "produce meanings" for ourselves. The question is whether it does so by the means Simpson indicates.

result receive no definite answer you may conclude that the poem because of a systematic exploitation of indeterminacy on the author's part. But understanding your text well enough to know which interpretations will yield results is much harder. Simpson knows what he wants to find. Where the sense of a line of Blake is not to his taste, he finds offending meaning is denied because the text "refuses to be a question mark", while elsewhere he includes a meaning conceived by Simpson, who "end up generating the text"—and in this case nearly rewriting it—"for ourselves".

Time and again, what he deduces from his quotation is not what it seems in me, what Lady Bunn or Coleridge put in his mouth. Simpson knows what he wants to find. Where the sense of a line of Blake is not to his taste, he finds offending meaning is denied because the text "refuses to be a question mark", while elsewhere he includes a meaning conceived by Simpson, who "end up generating the text"—and in this case nearly rewriting it—"for ourselves".

The truth is that the author's sulf appears unconvinced, as uncurvetous as to "produce meanings" for ourselves. The question is whether it does so by the means Simpson indicates.

In the broader discussions, the point often seems tantalizingly to disappear somewhere between the idea and the fact. It is part of his purpose, for instance, to show that the Romantics by and large turned away from metaphor, a highly suggestive and intriguing idea. If, however, one is going to apply the idea to Blake, one has to be very clear about what one means by metaphor.

If one decides to regard metaphor as a species of simile, or as containing an expressible hidden content (the view which underwrites Sir Geoffrey Keynes's extraordinary commentary on the Songs of *Innocence and of Experience*), one must not confuse this with the strict view of metaphor, reinforced by Wittgenstein and Donald Davidson, as of something without cognitive content; and this, in its turn, must be clearly distinguished from the simple belief that metaphor is confusing, merely emotive, and unsuited to serious discourse. If for Blake "optics was at the front of attention as a metaphor of limitation and geometrical abstraction", I think one should not be vague about how this relates to his defence of engraving as an art, his own illustrative genius in verbal and visual imagery, and so on.

Then Wordsworth: the way in

A foot in the door

By David Trotter

F. L. UNDERWOOD and ROGER SHARROCK (Editors) :
The Miscellaneous Works of John Bunyan
Volume I
Some Gospel-Truths Opened
A Vindication of Some Gospel Truths Opened
A Few Sighs From Hell
462pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £25.
0 19 812730 8

Seventeenth-century tracts have a way of getting their foot in the door before you have quite realized what is going on: a lurid title, a subtitle which extends into paragraphs and centuries that you have absorbed the interesting bits without turning a page. Once through the door, their pitch is fast and enveloping. If what you are about to read seems rather repetitive, says John Gibbs in his preface to *A Few Sighs From Hell*, "be not displeased at it; for that word that may not fasten upon thy heart in one page, may in another".

Such tracts had to hustle. Addressing a large but volatile audience on matters of supreme spiritual or political importance, they could not afford to be less than strident. Today, by contrast, Bunyan's pamphlets come soberly encased, annotated by a professor of social sciences, furnished with explanatory outlines, and sold at a price which indicates a captive market.

Every age has its own edition of Bunyan (or Milton, or Winstanley)—a process which has to do with the production and distribution of texts, but also with interpretative framing. For Bunyan: Charles Doe in 1692, George Offor in 1853, and now the Oxford English Texts Edition, of which the volume under review is the most recently published. What kind of reader does each of these versions anticipate? What will those readers be looking for? Roger Sharrock, general editor of the Oxford collection, proposes an answer: "The reader of Bunyan's *Miscellaneous Works* is more likely to be a social or ecclesiastical historian, a theologian or a psychologist, than a literary student."

One supposes that few of the readers anticipated by George Offor in the Victorian edition would have fitted these categories. Offor is a very definite presence, equipping each text with a fulsome "Advertisement", applauding Bunyan's best points, discussing the problems of nineteenth-century nonconformism—sometimes, it seems, just plain bullying, occasionally a character in one of the allegorical tales will catch his imagination, and be urged on by a chorus of encouragement from the stands: Mr Ready-to-halt, for example, in *Pilgrim's Progress*, who needs all the help he can get the hobbles along rather morosely and is last seen leaping into the River of Death with the cry "Welcome life!". The reader projected by Offor's editorial comments is one for whom Bunyan's spiritual struggles are very real, but who can none the less feel assured that the march of progress has removed some of the superstitions and sectarian bitterness under which Bunyan laboured. That reader would have found some sectarian bitterness to deplore in the three texts included here. They are Bunyan's first published works (1656-58): two anti-Quaker tracts and an interpretative tract on the parable of Dives and Lazarus. During the 1650s the Quakers had made great advances, gaining an estimated 30,000 to 40,000 adherents from a population of about 5,000,000. . . . Bedfordshire they recruited from Baptist congregations among others, so the threat Bunyan had to meet was urgent enough. *Some Gospel-Truths Opened* and *A Vindication* contributed to the "lively" debate between the two groups.

It touched on the nature of godhead. For the Quakers, Christ was eternal and spiritual, his resurrection an event occurring within men in the present. For Bunyan, Christ was both physical and spiritual, his resurrection a historical event. It is Bunyan who is left with the problem of validation likely to interest Sharrock's sociologists and psychologists. How was he going to convey to his audience the historical reality—the physirality—of a long-dead saviour?

There is something rather poignant about his recourse to the story of the disciple Thomas, who "would not be perswaded by the ethers that they had seen the Lord, except he did else see in his hands the print of the Nailes, and put his fingers into the print of the Nailes, and thrust his hand into his side". Having thrust his hand into Christ's body, Thomas declared himself convinced; he could not ask for evidence of a more material kind. Bunyan was clearly fascinated by the episode, and returned to it several times. The evidence it spoke of was unanswerable, and would surely lay to rest the severest doubts of the spiritual struggler.

Yet it was only a story, mediated by the written word. Twice mediated, in fact: by the biblical episode and then by Bunyan's commentary. *Some Gospel-Truths* Opened tries desperately to dispel that mediation, to borrow the aching certainty of physical evidence. "But we are all as an unclean thing", the Bible says, "and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64, 6). Bunyan's version of the last phrase, "menstrouous ragges", increases its human specificity. The written word may be our only means of proving the physical existence of Christ, but physical existence is in turn needed to "prove" the written word.

The questions raised by *A Few Sighs from Hell* are of a different nature, although not unrelated. George Offor found it rather terrifying: "Readers", he warns, "these are solemn realities". But the Oxford edition marvelously places it in its social and political context. We are told about the wages of agricultural workers, and about life-expectancy and per-urro valuation in seventeenth-century Bedfordshire. This sense of the text as a gauge from which the Corrector of a particular historical moment can be read off characterizes the modern approach. It is a perfectly valid approach, employed judiciously by Underwood and Sharrock. But it has been around for rather a long time now—in 1948, Henri Talon wrote of the "intense classconsciousness" revealed by the

Alternatives to extremism

By Robert L. Patten

JOHN P. FARRELL:
Revolution as Tragedy
The Dilemma of the Moderate from Scott to Arnold.
297pp. Cornell. £9.
0 8014 1278 1.

John Farrell makes an intriguing observation: writers as different as Scott, Byron, Carlyle and Arnold all depict protagonists caught in a revolutionary maelstrom between two extreme and often mutually destructive worlds.

In Scott the polarities are political, geographical, doctrinal and social; wracked by these antinomies, Scott's heroes try to found a third community based on moderation, hospitality and love. Henry Morton, though defeated at every turn by rival fanaticisms, eventually makes a place for himself in a restored and peaceable kingdom. But the conclusion of *Old Mortality* has struck many readers as contrived: the tensions of Scottish history exert a pull towards hypostasized conflict or mutual destruction. And that sense of paralysis looms over *The Bride of Lammermoor*, according to Farrell. Edgar Ravenswood can find no locus of moderation anywhere in his world, and so the novel becomes an elegy for a future without hope which dignifies Ravenswood's doomed struggle to construct an identity by assimilating the plot to tragedy.

Whereas Scott sought in temperate community a refuge from Scotland's legacy of tyrannical absolutism in religion and politics, Byron defiantly forged and precariously maintained his mocking equipoise as an alternative to the options offered by the revolutionary movements of his day. Farrell compares Byron with Camus: both writers strive to preserve the integrity of rebellion, which acknowledges choice and absurdity but still affirms a moral self, as opposed to revolution, which degenerates into sectarianism or nihilism. Thus Cain, rebelling against the arbitrary decree of universal death, brings death into the world and violates the human community in whose name he raised the firebrand of revolt. According to Farrell, all Byron's potentially comic plots of sacrificial redemption fell because "we so often convert the process of redemption into a resumption of the fall". In sum, "Byron's tragedies are not about the ruins of paradise; they are about the ruins of rebellion".

Farrell believes that Carlyle took a more ambivalent attitude towards revolution, despising its disorder but welcoming its potential for spiritual and social renovation. He was therefore committed to revolution as a generative principle in a way not true for Scott and Byron, and to that extent he celebrates "The Phoenix" in *Sartor Resartus* as a creative release from the paralysis of an "Everlocking No". In the *French Revolution*, Farrell argues, Mirabeau is the pivotal figure whose death midway through the second of its three parts, "The Constitution", tragically dooms the revolution to what Carlyle calls "slow-plating chronic dissolution and new organisation; . . . the agonies spread over years". Like Henry Morton, Mirabeau had a gift for "fellowship"; in his absence, the guillotine severs all human connections. But—and here Carlyle differs from his predecessors—that spirit of liberal fanaticism destroys in the name of a Reality born from Chaos "with a sword in its hand". Thus Carlyle privileges revolution as the historically necessary precondition for a renovated universe. "It is a tragical position", Carlyle tells us, "for a true man to work in revolutions."

While Carlyle celebrated the costs of revolution, Arnold would seem to reject what Farrell calls "the Romantic valorization of tragedy" announced by his predecessors, and to hold up instead the lofty and cathartic drama of Greece. The end of agony for Carlyle is action; for Arnold, peace. But Farrell claims that Arnold's 1853 *Preface* was really inspired by his Romantic predecessors, and that his sense of the predicament of the moderate in revolutionary times echoed theirs: "Wandering between two worlds, one dead/The other powerless to be born." The 1877 essay on Lord Falkland "quite clearly identifies Arnold's sense of tragedy as a response to revolution". Farrell argues, and that informing vision is enacted in "Empedocles", "Baldur Dead", and "Merope".

In his concluding chapter Farrell schematizes these results and relates politics to art. Scott and Byron worked creatively with ideologies, Scott presenting an artist (and narrator) who makes a community out of conflicting orthodoxies, Byron conversely gifting the artist with the insight to eschew all absolutes. Carlyle and Arnold, by contrast, reach for "transideological epiphanies". Carlyle believing he found one and moving into social prophecy, Arnold despairing of any spark from heaven and converting political into aesthetic consciousness. As Farrell summarizes: "'tragedy' for writers in the tradition described here is essentially a brooding account of how ideology can convert into idolatry. By resisting this conversion, and by resisting as well the temptations of mystical aestheticism, they discovered the enabling instruments of their art."

This book is timely, and builds with great intelligence upon a distinguished tradition of post-war studies of revolution, history and Romantic critical theory. The abstract prose is relieved from time to time by quips that do not, however, lessen the prevailing tendentiousness: of Carlyle, for example, Farrell writes that "Hopo springs from the Infernal" and that his "heart is on the side of light, not lightning". Minor slips occur: "Northrop" for Northrop Frye, Major Bellenden is said to be Lady Margaret's son, whom he is her brother-in-law. The first chapter is particularly daunting, especially in setting forth schema mercifully absent from most of the subsequent analysis, such as the positive, latent and negative drives that are said to be "the structure of revolution's tragic content".

But the dubious parts are not found in these surface blemishes. They lie, rather, in the uncomfortable fit of theory to artistic performance, and in the exclusiveness of the concept of tragedy which ignores such alternatives as have formulated by Coleridge and George Eliot.

Tragedy does not seem to be at the heart of any of these writers' work in the way that it is, for example, in Bulwer-Lytton's historical novels, consummately in *Daniel Deronda*, in Tennyson's *Idylls* and in Browning's (and Wagner's) *Ring*, and in Hardy. Tragedy is the pressure of factional dissolution against which Scott's romances recoil; it claims a high seriousness that Byron's relentless scepticism cannot accept; it values failure more than Carlyle does; and it issues in redemptive actions that Arnold can neither imagine nor locate in his world. Farrell's perspective illuminates shadowy corners, but it slights the centre of these authors' achievement: Scott's poetry, humour, sheer Scottishness; *Childe Harold*, *Don Juan* and Byron's ironic wit; Carlyle's epic celebrations of men of action like Frederick the Great; Arnold's persistently elegiac tone. In the service of a liberal humanism that would resist collapsing experience into ideology, Farrell's readings come perilously close, at times, to reducing art to thought.

From underground

By Peter Lewis

PETER CAREY :
The Fat Man in History
186pp. Faber. £4.95.
0 571 11619 1

FRANK MOORHOUSE :
The Everlasting Secret Family and Other Secrets
213pp. Angus and Robertson. £5.95.
0 207 14275 0

One Australian by-product of the war in Vietnam was the appearance of a counter-culture with its own outlets of expression. Young fiction writers, rebelling against academically approved models, also turned away from establishment literary periodicals, preferring to publish in popular publications like girlie magazines with large readerships. The two writers who did most to encourage this "new" short fiction were Frank Moorhouse and Michael Wilding, who eventually launched their own magazine *Tabloid Story* in 1972 in a most ingenious and enterprising way. Instead of publishing another "little" magazine, they were able to issue *Tabloid Story* as a supplement to various host papers and weeklies, thus avoiding production and distribution problems while at the same time achieving circulations measured in tens of thousands. This extraordinary success made *Tabloid Story* both a stimulus to and a major outlet for new writers, and the current vitality of short fiction in Australia owes much to the magazine and its founders.

One of the outstanding writers to have emerged during this period is Peter Carey. The University of Queensland Press, which has been making new-wave writers available in its Paperback Prose series since 1972, has published two collections of Carey's work, *The Fat Man in History* (1974) and *War Crimes* (1979), and he has been represented in various anthologies, notably the Angus and Robertson "Bookshelf" series that introduced him (and four of his contemporaries, including Moorhouse and Wilding) to English readers, *The Most Beautiful Lies*. The new Faber book is a selection of work culled from his two Australian volumes under the title of the first. Of the ten stories in the Faber book, four are from his 1974 collection and six from his 1979 one.

Carey survives transportation very much better than some Australian writers, for there is nothing conspicuously local in his stories; even the reader who has never heard of Balmain or thinks King's Cross is part of London will encounter no difficulty. Carey looks to the Americas for his literary models; the dolls he delights to Borges and to such American "new fiction" writers as Donald Barthelme. Carey's non-realistic stories, which tend towards fable, own something to surrealism, something to science fiction, and something to an older tradition of the imaginative romance and Gothic tale (especially Poe). Yet the fantasy is always rigorously controlled, so that once the imaginary context is established—a society in which fat men are seen as enemies of the revolution ("The Fat Man in History"), a world in which people dematerialize ("Do You Love Me?") or in which they transform themselves in a genetic lottery" ("The Chance")—the narrative proceeds with quasi-realistic attention to precise detail.

In another story, "Exotic Pleasures", the poor unemployed couple waiting at an Interstellar Space Terminal in the bogs of a mining job in outer space acquire an extraterrestrial bird that gives extreme pleasure to anyone who touches it. Once this bizarre situation is established Carey treats it matter-of-factly and without any SF extravagance as he traces the effects of the bird on the couple's fortunes up to the final ironic twist. This naturalizing of the fantastic is probably Carey's most distinctive characteristic. But he is also notable for his supposedly old-fashioned ability to hold the reader's attention.

While strongly recommending *The Fat Man in History*, I do have one reservation. Having read Carey before with considerable enthusiasm, I found returning to these stories somewhat disappointing. I suspect that they depend a great deal on initial impact and lose rather than gain with repeated readings.

Frank Moorhouse, now in his early forties, could be called an Elder Statesman of the Australian avant-garde. He is much more consciously an Australian writer than Carey, much more rooted in the particularities and problems of his society, and he draws heavily on personal experience. A realist and a social critic, he is humorous, sardonic, ironic. He is especially good at recording the current intellectual and artistic scene in Sydney with its pretensions, and achievements.

But if Moorhouse is more traditional than Carey in one way, he is much more radical in form and technique, sometimes making extensive use of typographical devices such as negative printing (white on black): the title-page of his new book, *The Everlasting Secret Family and Other Secrets*, has bits of white emerging from the pervading darkness. Several of his books are "discontinuous narratives", collections of loosely related, interwoven stories, some of which have been published separately or even appear in different books. Furthermore, characters from one book may turn up in others so that there is an interflow between texts. The openness of these structures emphasizes randomness, relativity, and discontinuitedness.

The Everlasting Secret Family and Other Secrets consists of four apparently self-contained stories (two with explanatory notes à la *Waste Land*), each of which is divided into sections with their own titles. The longest story, "Imogene Continued", for example, contains ten sub-sections, some of which have appeared independently; in addition, the central character, Cindy, features in two of Moorhouse's other books. The first story, "Pacific City", ends with the words, "To be continued". Moorhouse employs a different narrative technique for each of the main stories. "Pacific City" is a third-person narration; "The Dutch Letters" consists mainly of fragments from wartime letters; "Imogene Continued" is a first-person narration; while "The Everlasting Secret" is described as "An Erotic Memoir in Six Parts, prepared for publication by the author from letters, monologues, conversations, diaries and other sources".

These technical differences between the stories reflect differences in content. "Pacific City" deals with a cinema proprietor in the 1930s; "The Dutch Letters" with a Dutch family in Australia during the Second World War; "Imogene Continued" with the rape of a radical feminist by three Aboriginees at an academic conference; and "The Everlasting Secret" with a homosexual love-affair. Yet the juxtaposition of the stories brings out submerged connections between them. Throughout the book there is a contrast between what can be revealed and what must be kept secret.

Moorhouse is at his best in "Imogene Continued", where he explores contemporary mores, confusions and anxieties in the academic-bohemian world he knows so well. But the very different "The Everlasting Secret" is also impressive, a sensitive study of sexual humiliation which is full of pornographic elements without being pornographic—although they might not believe that in Australia.

William F. Buckley, Jr's *Who's On First* (276pp. Allen Lane, £5.95. 0 7139 1359 2) is set in 1957; America and Russia are in a desperate race to put the first satellite into space. Both programmes are running into difficulties, for various reasons, and Blockford Oates of the CIA is given the task of kidnapping a Soviet physicist who, as a KGB chief increasingly puts it, is "critical to an on-going scientific operation to which the Kremlin attaches the highest priority". William F. Buckley has, thank God, abandoned the appalling facetiousness that characterized his first Blackford Oates story—the only funny lines here are unintentional—but with that gone we are left with a pretty run-of-the-mill thriller. Its only claim to be different lie in its setting—the good old Cold War days, when white was white and black was black, and young WASPS joined the CIA after leaving the Boy Scouts—and its style: like Queen Victoria the author knows only one way of conveying emphasis—through italics.

Tod Bilton

Out of the ghetto

By Holly Eley

MICHAEL THELWELL :
The Harder They Come
392pp. Plain Press, 7 Chalcot Road, London NW1. £6.95.
0 86104 311 1

Ambitious, half-educated peasant youths who exchange the security of the ancestral hamlet and family yam patch for the city blighter, only to find themselves forced into a life of hustling followed by violent early death, are common enough in the Third World. But Ivanhoe Martin happened to catch and hold the Jamaican popular imagination to become a legend during his short lifetime.

Perhaps this was largely a matter of timing. His desperate gesture against an unjust society was made during the late 1950s when the end of colonial administration and the beginning of self-government promised much to the overcrowded, unemployed shanty town dwellers of West Kingston. It was a time, too, when the Rae Tafari movement began to appear less like a fringe cult for ganja-smoking layabouts with tangled hair; with its blend of animism and freely interpreted Christianity it seemed to offer the disaffected poor a culture unique to Jamaica. Anarchistic reggae anthems were instant combustion for young men to whom imported handgune were readily available and whose heroes, even if they had begun to read the Coptic Bible and pay lip service to Haile Selassie, were still James Cagney and Peter Lorre.

In telling the story, part-truth, part-legend, already explored in Perry Henzell's 1970s cult film (also entitled *The Harder They Come*), of a smalltime West Kingston Super Fly's instinctive plea for a better world, Michael Thelwell has written an important and near-flawless first novel. It is in no sense a novelization of the film, Ivanhoe, growing up in a rural matriarchy, reminds us of the young George Lamming in the autobiographical *In The Castle Of My Skin*. But Jamaica is not stable, "little England", Barbados, and Ivanhoe's conservative grandmother sees the easy to schoolmenement as unusual labour (pleasant self-sufficiency rather than scholarship rewarded by a bureaucratic or teaching post). Voluptuous Miss Ida and the obsessive reggae rhythms that fill her forbidden Blue Bay Café excite the rushes, adolescent Ivanhoe who is transformed into "Rhygin" (Jamaican for spirit, vigour, sex). A nascent reggae star, he boards the bus for Kingston.

Thelwell's gift for lyrical description equals that of Lamming in his best. In two marvellous set pieces—village elder Maas' Nanie's rum shelling match and the grandmother's burial (obeah practitioners of esoteric beliefs vie with each other to honour a respected spirit)—he skilfully contrasts the invigorating influence of tribal legends with the constrictive realities of a lush landscape and its inhabitants, who are stoically resistant to social change.

Dreams of fame are the force that sustain Rhygin during the years of poverty and bewilderment in the chaos of Kingston's suburban slums. The humiliations of imprisonment, the sunnyside switch, even the theft of his hit song by an unscrupulous entrepreneur, only strengthen his resolve to return home wreathed in laurels. And gradually Rhygin (with the encouragement of his woman, Elsa, and the gentle Rastaman guitar-picker, the Pedro) finds his niche on the street. The fragility of fame is soon revealed, however, when Rhygin decides to revisit Blue Bay. Laden with flashy, status-conscious presents, he anticipates warmth and recognition from old friends. But bauxite mining has massacred the countryside; Miss Ida's café has been absorbed by a club for white tourists; Maas' Nanie is dead, his impeccably tended smallholding an encampment of American hippies; most disconcerting of all the family land has become a jungle.

Awareness that he has lost his roots for no illusion happens desolate Rhygin, ripe for a dramatic gesture, to refuse to pay protection to police agents who control the ganja trade. In a series of sharply drawn scenes he almost kills five constables. As his luck finally runs out, he reflects on his failures from every juke box tune he has heard, he evades and slaughters poor rosin police pressure, he is driven together in little him, and attempts his escape into exile. But even his defenceless end alone—his machine-gunned to death by a platoon of policemen, in an unwilling ghetto against injustice, in his insides, though at the cost of his life and outside the law, are shown to have been realized.

Michael Thelwell, Jamaican-born and a lecturer in Afro-American Literature at the University of Massachusetts, has said that he decided to write *The Harder They Come* so as to oppose "those visions of the Caribbean as a lush, incomplete, second-hand, romantic idyll

to produce a real Jamaican novel that the people who are the subject might enjoy and recognize themselves and not be embarrassed or offended; they are, in the case of Nalpaul's books, more for white Western readers in the blocks of the West Indies.

Thelwell's attention to detail, his ability to create characters of dimension, his ear with dialogue (much of it in Jamaican dialect), his unqualified sympathy for Jamaican enthusiasm, his wit (through implication and understatement to our moral sense, his sense of self-parody and irony) as well as his plainly stated belief in the fertility of survival, whether it may—these combine to give us a convincingly brilliant picture of Jamaican life.

Mr Watson's first novel shows considerable skill in plotting and juxtaposition of what look like two different ideas—the detailed, realistic pedestrian analysis of a young steady marriage going through irretrievable, if melodramatic, crisis; and, to analyze the child's sub plot involving guilty lovers, revenge, primitive gun-justice, and a symbolic swipe at the savagery of nationalism. Just as Gus recalls the persecution of his German father by Post End football hooligans, and seems to be cast neighbouring on a Welsh fishing community (whereas Kate, with distinctly Welsh forebears, is immediately at home), so Stradling, the English tutor despoiling and frustrated engineers his own contemporary, even if the locale seems only indirectly responsible for their revenge.

The last sentence reads "And the creatures that hunted by night awoke, and grinned, and assembled towards the sleeping room". As prizes for spotting the shades of Iris Murdoch in Robert Watson's background—there are many—jostling brave over stagnant waters, entangled passions uttered at the probable moments—and the sense of dark mysterious forces is well conveyed. Where he is less successful and it shows, is in moving from the meticulous visual rendering of a scene to the shock of action and dialogue which should be spontaneous and exciting but displays an air of banality: a murderer, hunted down, says "I broke me up, you know what I'd done"; potential lovers feel "as though they could be friendly without danger of a relationship complicating life"; a "florrified" very inadequately answers the reaction to seeing a child killed.

The unsureness in tackling climax, and odd lapses into quaint usage ("I didn't used to take photographs") which could have been more firmly edited, are redeemed by the strengths of Watson's bold imaginative effort. An early training in cinematography has perhaps helped his sharp focus on detail—with light and surfaces especially noticeable; his current occupation in teaching English will—with luck—lead confidence in his narrative style.

Back to the land

By Marigold Johnson

OWEN KELLY :
Tales out of School
87p. Blackstaff Press. £5.95.
0 85640 199 4

ROBERT WATSON :
Events Beyond the Heartlands
241pp. Heinemann. £6.50.
0 434 84200 1

Which of us, frenzied and helplessly trapped in our mobile box, inhaling city fumes, shuffling impatiently for a place in the checkout queue, grabbing the telephone as though salvation were to hand, has not daydreamed of the rural alternative? And, since livings must be earned, of the easy peace which—it might seem—is the lot of the self-sufficient cottage dweller, be he potter, weaver, fisherman or, like Messrs Kelly and Watson, rural schoolteacher. Beyond the colour supplement image of stoneware and sorrel soup, however, lies the all-important question of the local community, and no man is happy until he has his piece in it.

For Owen Kelly, recalling two years in a village school in Ulster, the status went with the job: "Master" he was, to everyone, from the first bottle of stout poured by a "pert-time layabout" Donovan over his thumb—Donovan all the while explaining that his marriage had lasted only long enough for her to go out for a paper, him to go into the bar, and "That's the last I ever seen of her. But sure I had a grand week of it on my own". Along with the eleven pubs and three churches, the 500 inhabitants had their "Mountainoy Man", who would send text-loads of wives down on fair day to buy them a few pots of shoes—and the woman who took six left shoes "to try" turned out to be married to a one-legged former, so never returned with the cash.

Tales out of School is the real brow stuff for telling over the bar or, while lying among the grass, hoppets for a rest from cutting turf—since the Master, besides recounting the expected repertoire of pupils' malapropisms and disastrous amateur dramatics, earned his place as often in punitions as he fore the blackboard. The cheerful, gabby tone, with here and there a fine truck of Flann O'Brian-ish lyrical fancy, almost succeeds in concealing the slight material which has found its way between hard covers—and good luck to Mr Kelly, with his "five kids and most of my own teeth", who, since the halcyon days he here recalls, has been barman, hod-carrier, welder's mate, chiropodist, and lecturer. What price the rural alternative, did I hear?

No such energetic or safe prospect awaits Gus Baudecker, the London odmen of *Events Beyond the Heartlands*, who uses his redundancy pay to take Kate and the children away from it all to a cottage on the Welsh coast. The pace is at first unbearably domestic; two follow pregnant Kate getting into clogs, admire the eye-level pine cupboards, the jangling bell on the post office door, and the repairing of the old bike, learn plant names like comfrey, and meet donkey-jacketed friend Morgan with leles to toll of wealthy David Stradling who has seduced sister Stella to live up in the big house. What with Kate sketching her tapestry design and Gus pandering to the new consciousness developing in Wales, this "superb uninhabited land" to be set against the "squalor and decay" produced by exploiting industrialists like Stradling, leaflitude begins to overtake the reader even faster than it does the new residents of *Rockbreak* (and why must we have all these house names italicized?)

But gradually Robert Watson reveals that we are, after all, not so far from the shock-horror world of the media men, who arrive first to cover an oil-slick, then an axe-murder. Gus finds the "lovely glowing painfully white, bleached in the unlit depths, crawling with black bugs" as he stumbles from a muddy pond, and, even before fire is out of his sodden jeans, there is a child's death and he is off on a panic country-wide drive with Stella, ending in a shooting drama. With suffering Kate really go back into Surrey executive existence after all that?

GER SHATTUCK :
e Forbidden Experiment
e Story of the Wild Boy of yron
pp. Secker and Warburg. £6.95.
56 45875 6

was in November 1799 that poleon seized power and promised over age of peace and prosperity; December, as censorship was essed and scholars took advantage the lull, that a "Society of the servers of Man" was founded in ris; in January 1800 that a mute, ked boy was caught scavenging food in a remote French village. Roger Shattuck says, the timing his appearance at the opening of e century was remarkable; the orld seemed to be waiting for him.

It was not a squeamish age: the abandonment of unwanted children, d even infanticide, were not unown; the mentally and physically andicapped went about freely; hy did the appearance of a avage" child become a national *ause célèbre*? At first, indeed, it idently caused no great stir, for e child had been fed potatoes in e past by incurious peasants, hen he appeared at the village of Saint-Sernin, however, he was taken efore a local commissioner who had little education and saw him the ery rare specimen who might be of interest to science. He was ent by stages to Paris to the care of the renowned Abbé Sicard, director of the Institute for Deaf-Mutes and also of the Society of the bservers of Man.

Shattuck is excellent at explaining his simple terms why the boy should have interested each group, and the issues that his very existence raised. (That Shattuck's terms can be very simple—"a Frenchman by the name of Descartes", "François Truffaut belongs to the so-called nouvelle Vague of French film directors"—is presumably because the book is based on a series of lectures to schools; it is a much briefer version of Harlan Lane's recent book on the same subject.) These issues are still unsolved and still of concern to psychology and philosophy. Because the boy had been keeping himself alive in the wild and tried to return to it, because he was scarred and whipped, uncouseralned, without speech, and totally primitive in every way, it was quickly recognized that he was different from the merely deaf or backward; he was rare because he was in a state of nature. What are such a being capable of? Was his nature benign or aggressive? Had he an immortal soul? Would education prove him to be a *tabula rasa* on which the moral traits that distinguish man from beast could be inscribed?

We still lack the answer to the question: nature or nurture? No one doubts that we must take both into account; but the psychodynamic psychologist — to oversimplify somewhat—is inclined to see the child as equipped from the start with drives and purposes, while the behaviourist stresses the determining role of the environment. Chomsky argues for a pro-programmed, linguistic ability, and others vigorously debate it. The Society of the Observers of Man would be interested to know that experimental psychology since their time has found that much of the lower animals' behaviour is innately determined, while that of the higher mammals is more plastic; monkeys reared abnormally, for instance, in Harlow's experiments, for example, grow up permanently impaired.

Mercy forbids us, however, to take the crucial investigation on our own species. The nearest thing to the "forbidden experiment" was carried out in the 1940s by the American psychologists Wayne Dennis, who reared twin babies in a room for six months, bottle-feeding and cooing them without playing or talking. This rather disgraceful experiment, which has never been repeated, was inconclusive—and in any case the experimenters began to find themselves responding to the children more than they originally intended to.

Abbé Sicard and his Society were well aware that the Wild Boy (who was hopefully been named Victor) was an unplanned product of the forbidden experiment, and might be crucially relevant to the argument about man's place in nature:

> He will no doubt be zealously visited by those who for a long time have wanted a child to be brought up apart from all social contact and communication, spoken to by no one, and whose tiniest actions could be watched such as he might use to express his first sensations, his first ideas and thoughts—if it is possible to think without fixed conventional signs. Such a child has now been found.

Sicard was famous for his education of deaf-mutes by sign language, proving that their intelligence was unimpaired once they could be reached by some other medium than sound—and by implication perhaps, that the true, moral being was always there to be found in the apparent brute. The mythical figure of the savage can represent either innocence or brutality. Miranda or Caliban; clearly the scientists who studied Victor were hoping to find in him a proof of the natural man's innate goodness. The philosopher Virey, who added a special section on Victor to his *Natural History of the Human Species*, closed it with:

> Go you way, unfortunate young man, though this grievous world, and dissolve your untutored simplicity in the bonds of social existence. . . . May you, simple creature, display the sublime virtues of a generous soul and transmit to future generations this honourable example, as the eternal proof of what a child of innocent Nature can do.

The other side of the myth was represented by the reports that were round Paris on Victor's arrival—that he was covered in fur, could dive like a duck, leapt through trees like a squirrel. Sicard in fact was soon disappointed by the boy's unteachability, and after a few months a report was commissioned and concluded that he was simply a grossly retarded imbecile. It was at this point that Jean-Marc Itard, the young resident doctor of the Institute for Deaf-Mutes, proposed that the boy be kept on at the Institute under his own particular care.

Nine months later, in August 1801, Itard presented a report to the Society for the Observers of Man. He had become deeply involved with Victor, and had progress he had achieved with him, helped by the housekeeper Madame Guérin, was considerable. Before Itard's training Victor had been not only mute, apparently deaf, indifferent to temperature and intolerant of clothing, confinement, and most foods, but conspicuously unaware of others' existence; he had no interest in anything offered him and no concentration. Itard organized an indulgent, pleasant routine for him, and trained him particularly in exercises of attention and recognition, and he offered him affection. To the twenty-five-year-old bachelor, Victor mattered very much as a research project that might make his name—but also as a human being.

Victor learned to wear clothes, eat at a table, distinguish a number of shapes and patterns and sounds, recognize the word "no", and express himself skilfully through gesture. More: he was admitted to the human race; he learned love, pain, remorse, forgiveness; he learned to sin.

Victor was still in bed, and he sat up as soon as he saw me and held out his arms. But when he saw that instead of going up to him I remained standing in front of him, with a cold booring and an unhappy expression, he plunged back under the covers and began to cry. My strong reproaches made his sobs redouble. When I had stimulated his feelings to their limit, I went to sit on his bed. That was always the sign of forgiveness. He understood, made the first advances of reconciliation, and all was forgotten.

Itard's report to the Society in 1801 stressed the advances achieved in less than a year and drew the conclusion that, as Locke and Condillac had argued, a human being is indeed something like a blank page to be written on, that development of his human faculties is dependent on sensory stimulus from outside. As in the current debate over innate differences in intelligence, the argument, in post-Revolutionary France, had political implications:

The child of innocent Nature

By Rosemary Dinnage

man is only born free if he is born without a nature ready-made for him by his noble or humble forebears.

Itard worked with incredible patience for five years more. There were many setbacks: "Unhappy boy", he was to exclaim, "since all this work has been in vain, go back to your woods". Eventually, however, he taught Victor letters, then words, then the words' referents: the boy was able to read a word, remember it, and fetch the object it referred to. The peak of his achievement was when, after years of work, he picked out the letters LAIT that he had been shown and on his own initiative asked for a glass of milk. But for all this he still could not speak. Itard's months of voice exercise had been in vain, and he realized Victor would never tell the story of what it was like to be himself. There were two further reasons why progress slowed down, came to a halt, and was reassessed as failure. For all the boy's demonstrations of affection, Itard began to see that he remained entirely enclosed in himself, able to love and be hurt, certainly, but not to imagine things from another's point of view. And secondly, Victor was reaching puberty.

In his first year with Itard, Victor, as the talk of Paris, had been taken to the salon of Madame Récamier. She hoped, it seems, that the "beauty that had capivated civilized men would receive similar homage from this child of nature". Not at all. Victor pocketed everything on the dinner-table that he fancied, ran out into the garden and climbed a tree—leaving the guests at Clichy-la-Garenne to draw a sweeping and useful comparison between the perfection of civilized life and the distressing picture of nature untamed", and to wish that Rousseau were present to see his theories disproved.

But within another few years Victor's sexuality had become an extreme embarrassment. He had violent moods of shouting and tearing his clothes. He clutched at women indiscriminately and then pushed them away. If Itard has not bowdlerized his account, it seems that Victor was simply not clear what to do with them: "Our young Savage has been consumed by continuous and violent desires without the faintest idea of their object and without showing the slightest preference for any woman." He had acquired a rudimentary understanding that he must behave himself, but he had never had practice in being with other human beings than his two guardians. Itard, as a true Romantic, had evidently hoped that sexual awakening would bring that ability to empathize with others that Victor lacked, and was profoundly discouraged when the opposite was the case. The training programme was gradually discontinued, and after some years Victor was moved into a small house near the Institute with Madame Guérin. He died there, forgotten, around the age of forty. Itard remained at the Institute and became a distinguished teacher of the deaf.

"Nothing but bitterness was prepared for you in tearing you away from the protective dryads who watched over you", Virey had written; "You had only the one need of nourishment. How many others than you will be unable to satisfy will now relentlessly assail you? How many desires will be born in your footsteps, and will grow with the tree of your knowledge and with your social ties?" It is hard to know whether we should pity the Wild Boy for being torn away from the protective dryads; it was inevitable, in one case, that his fellows should discover him and try to bring him back within the tribe. Shattuck suggests that by making the boy conscious of himself and of "ideas" beyond immediate instinctive needs which he had not the language to express, Itard may have condemned him to a new kind of loneliness. And like a zoo animal, he seems to have continued to feel deprived of the conditions he had been used to: running outside when there was wind or storm; gazing out for hours in full moonlight; and, every day after his meal, standing by the window slowly sipping a glass of water. "It is as if at such a moment of enjoyment this child of nature wanted to reunite the only two possessions that have survived his loss of liberty—a drink of clear water and the sight of sun and countryside."

Itard and Virey, and all who wrote about the boy, express at times a passionate involvement with the child of nature and his lost liberty. Standing as we do on the borderline of savagery, we look across at the ancestral ape and libidinous baby with a mixture of longing and repudiation. Among the crowd of mythical figures on that borderline—Mowgli, Tarzan; Yahoos and Houyhnhnms; hobgoblins, orang-outangs, pygmies and Hottentots—feral children have exerted a confusing fascination. They seem to have crossed the barrier line, and if we could only give them speech, would be able to tell us about the other side.

But none of them have been able to do so and we are not even sure what a feral child is, though cases have been reported from as far back as the fourteenth century. There is no proof of how long such children have been running wild when discovered, and no way of knowing how much of their abnormality was present before they were abandoned, and how much is the result of isolation. Victor's case, the only well documented one, has been argued over for nearly three centuries. Three main diagnoses have been put forward: that he was, as the first report concluded, a severely retarded child who was, perhaps, abandoned for that reason; that he was autistic or schizophrenic, which again would be a reason why he was abandoned, or got lost; and that he was in essence a normal child, whose potentialities for speech and socialization atrophied beyond repair while he was living wild.

Dennis (who carried out the experiment of rearing babies in isolation) has supported the first explanation, but Shattuck argues that a young child retarded to the point of imbecility would not have been able to find food and water for himself or evade the wolves that still inhabited the forests. Bruno Bettelheim has argued that Victor was a typically autistic child, and compares his behaviour with that of the children in his school for autistics; yet Victor's exuberantly affectionate responses once he was treated with kindness are not typical of true autism.

The theory that his handicaps were entirely the result of years of isolation from his own kind is quite persuasive. Shattuck describes the case of the American child who had been kept in a dark room alone since she was two; in spite of devoted care later on, her speech and social behaviour never became normal. She did, however, acquire some speech, in spite of having been isolated as early as two; while Victor, who could hardly have survived if he had been less than five or six when abandoned—an age when normal children have fluent speech— never achieved a proper word in spite of years of training.

The alternative diagnoses that have been suggested are often in fact found to shade into one another when children are carefully tested today; there must have been a combination of factors in Victor's case. There are also some specific neurological handicaps that have been distinguished by straightforward deafness or mental retardation, and to a child with such sensory impairment the world makes so little sense that "savage" behaviour is very likely. In view of Victor's total loss of speech at an age, it seems a possibility that he was suffering from receptive aphasia—an inability to code into meaning the sounds he has heard; that he was taken for an imbecile and was abandoned or got lost; that he survived on his own because his underlying intelligence was more or less normal at first; and that a long period of isolation finally and permanently impaired all his abilities. But we shall never know, and the "child of innocent Nature" will remain a mystery.

Sailing into the unknown

By Kenneth Kitchen

NANCY JENKINS :
The Boat beneath the Pyramid
King Cheops' Royal Ship
184pp. 150 illustrations.
Thames and Hudson. £6.95.
0 500 05035 X.

In Egypt, just over a quarter century ago, during a routine clearance of débris along the south side of the Great Pyramid, a young Egyptian archaeologist came upon a pair of long narrow pits roofed over with huge limestone blocks and sealed off with plaster. A probe-hole burrowed into the eastern pit enabled the discoverer to glimpse the timbers of an ancient ship stored within. The date of the find was already fixed by the name on the sealing-blocks of the pharaoh Djedefre, son and successor of Cheops, builder of the Great Pyramid; this "new" treasure was some 4,500 years old.

Nearly all cedar of Lebanon, the ancient timbers proved to be in remarkably sound condition. However, having been ceremonially dismantled into 651 sections and pieces (with over 1,200 bits all told), the ship presented Egypt's Antiquities Service with an immense jigsaw puzzle. Fortunately, the service had the man for the job in the person of its skilled restorer, Hajj Ahmed Y. Moustafa, whose 16 years of dedicated, patient work culminated in the successful reconstruction by 1970 of a superbly gracious vessel, over 140ft in length, housed in a glass-walled museum on site. However, the latter is not suited to the needs of potential visitors — or (seemingly) to the need of the ancient vessel for a stable atmosphere. So, ship and museum alike have never been accessible to the public.

Such in essence is the fascinating story told in *The Boat beneath the Pyramid*, well enough known to Egyptologists, but not to a wider public. In her narrative, Nancy Jenkins presents the discovery, excavation and reconstitution of the ship of King Cheops, helped by numerous "snapshots" of all the main stages of the discovery and recovery. Three chapters on early Egyptian history, on ships and shipbuilding in those times and on relevant aspects of ancient Egyptian religious and funerary beliefs, provide most of the background needed to understand the ship's role.

That said, the role of this splendid vessel remains enigmatic, and (as archaeological journalist rather than Egyptologist) Mrs Jenkins is wisely cautious in her assessment. The ship carries none of the symbols to be expected on a barque of the sun-god; on the other hand, its arrangements show no provision for carrying the bier and catafalque needed at Cheops's funeral. Thus it seems to be neither a solar nor a strictly funerary barque. The author rather inclines towards the view of Edwards and Corny that this vessel was a travelling boat for the dead king's voyages in the after-life. This view would find endorsement in the very "normal" presence of an ample cabin, supports for awnings and small baldachine such as are shown in tomb and temple scenes and on models, for travelling boats of those times. The known empty pits may once have contained solar and funerary ships; what the west pit contains cannot easily be guessed.

Given the sad fact that the ship itself cannot be seen by the public, Mrs Jenkins's book is doubly welcome, as a reliable, readable popular account of one of the oldest and finest wooden ships in the world and (for most of us) as a substitute for visiting the real thing until such time anyway as local examples give way to proper conservation and display.

Mal paese

By Patrick McCarthy

ALBERTO ARBASINO:
Un paese senza
353pp. Milan: Garzanti. L8500.

There is in Italy a genre of books that expounds the following proposition: "all things Italian have been, are and always will be in a state of utter chaos". A few years ago Giorgio Bocca wrote *L'Italia è malata*; now Alberto Arbasino experiments with the genre in *Un paese senza*.

For three hundred and fifty pages he reels off his list of follies: Italy spends vast sums of money importing oil to feed a petrochemical industry that makes even more vast losses; the Italian Communist Party, which calls itself "traditional and revolutionary", denounces the Christian Democrats while demanding to govern with them. One could join in Arbasino's game and draw up one's own list: the Italian middle-classes pay high prices for bad French wines while ignoring their own cheaper and better wines; an Autonomia leader, who was arrested while in possession of a guided missile, solemnly told the police that he had found it on the motorway; Italy's highly paid soccer players have no little desire to play that they fix the matches. This last discovery was a blow even to the sceptical Italians. They knew their politicians were corrupt but it hurt them to learn that their star centre-forward, Paolo Rossi, was cheating.

Bocca had a special target: the Milanese upper-classes who were voting communist and calling for revolution while hiding their money in Swiss banks. Arbasino's special target is the New or Newer Left militants who participated in the Bologna demonstrations of 1977, reads *Lotta Continua*, hoo occasionally a few years of a university without ever attending classes much less obtaining a degree, is possibly on drugs, almost certainly unemployed and knows someone who knows someone who has become a terrorist. Such militants exasperate Arbasino because they exalt the factory-workers while staying as far as possible from the factory, and because they spend their lives in assemblies that discuss possible demonstrations to protest against ill-defined evils in distant countries which they cannot visit because they earn no money.

In such assemblies, claims Arbasino, concrete facts give way to high-flown abstractions which are invariably decked out with quotations from the unfortunate Gramsci. Hours may be spent deciding whether disco music is right-wing or left. Further hours are consumed in the quest for a master: Mao and Castro have long since failed but perhaps Jacques Lacan or John Travolta can replace them.

Many of Arbasino's onslaughts are unfair, although this scarcely matters. One might argue that tiny fares well in export markets and that Milan has in recent years rivalled Paris as a fashion centre. One might argue, too, that the Newer Left is necessary because it is the expression, however distorted, of hundreds of thousands of young people to whom the economy offers nothing except permanent unemployment. But the "Italy-is-in-chaos" genre does not heed such cautious pedantry.

The real weakness of *Un paese senza* lies in the writing itself. Whereas Bocca merely described confusion, the more ambitious Arbasino seeks to render it by a ceaseless flood of words. His book is divided into short paragraphs full of lists, personifications, rhetorical questions and doggerel poems. But, although such fragmented rhetoric is supposed to mirror Italy's confusion, one grows weary of such passages as this: "Is not today's Italy . . . a medieval, Middle-Eastern casbah full of gipsies and knaves, cannibals and thieves, a cashah which echoes with the miscellaneous rhapsodies of know-nothing rock and anarchical pop and where everyone talks passionately to himself and weeps over his existence?"

Readers of *L'Espresso* and *La Repubblica* are familiar with Arbasino's talent. In his articles he begins with a painting or a play and spins out a meditation on modern culture that stands on its own as a glittering moment of insight. But in *Un paese senza* these moments are repetitions because they are not bound together into a whole. Fragmentation of language does not in itself render the fragmentation of culture. There must be a logic or a personal vision that illuminates the book, if it is not to become a part of the chaos which is his subject. While rehashing indictments for their use of foreign words, Arbasino uses thousands himself and shows an ironic awareness of the confusion they cause. But he uses them arbitrarily, rather as the Newer Left militant uses his quotations from Gramsci. *Un paese senza* drags on, satirizing conceptual art, Pope John-Paul II and skateboards. It could be longer still or else shorter, because it has no organic shape.

Nagging doubts

By Stefan Collini

PETER MARGH (Editor):
The Conscience of the Victorian State
257pp. Brighton: Harvester. £20.
0 85527 865 X

"Before you begin a thing", warned Charles Haddon Spurgeon, not one to advocate indiscriminate plunge-taking, "make sure it is the right thing to do: ask Mr Conscience about it". The founding premise of this collection of essays is that where matters of state were concerned, Mr Conscience had to field on exceptionally large number of enquiries during the Victorian period.

This theme receives its clearest and most plausible statement in the editor's introduction, where he argues that Victorian public debate over the conduct of government was dominated by the invocation of the language of morality to such the same way as that of the twentieth century has been by the language of economics. As ever, the value of such a perception depends upon the kind of explanatory or interpretive purchase upon otherwise neglected or intractable areas of the past which it furnishes the historian with, and this in turn may partly be a matter of good judgment about the most appropriate strategy for netting and displaying any such elusive quarry. The authors of the present volume (all of whom teach at North American universities) have opted for six separate essays on the Whig, Utilitarian, Gladstonian, Nonconformist, Imperial, and Conservative "consciences".

It is immediately apparent that the common term to their titles by no means denotes the same thing in each case, nor are the bearers of the respective "consciences" properly comparable. David Roberts's essay on the Utilitarians and Richard Helmstadter's elegant piece on the Nonconformists look at the manner of political moralizing associated with two groups which were at least constituted by shared beliefs of some kind, even if not always of this kind, whereas John Coll's essay on "The Imperial Conscience" is a brisk tour of some of the justifications of, and reservations about, imperial (and colonial) matters entertained by various people at various times—not all of them during Victoria's reign—as well as some incidental observations about Darwin and Marx. Two of the other essays are more specific than their titles suggest: Joseph Hamburger's assay on "The Whig Conscience" is in fact a brief anthology of quotations from Macaulay, while the editor's thoughtful and incisive discussion of "The Conservative Conscience" (not, interestingly but accurately, "The Tory Conscience") examines the contrasting views of a leader's obligations to party and country held by Peel, Disraeli and, in a particularly fine brief sketch, Salisbury.

Even if the contrivance of a broad of "consciences" is ignored, the chief unease one is bound to have about such a strategy concerns the difficulties of isolating any particular kind of moral argument as distinctive of any particular group. For such argument to have had any polemical force, it had necessarily to draw upon and re-shape the evaluative vocabulary which was more generally available for the conduct of political debate. The possibilities and limits of this vocabulary may need to be acknowledged by the historian even when they cannot be explored in any detail, and several of these essays seem at times in danger of wanting to claim for party what was meant for country. To be told, for example, that in Salisbury's speeches "character" received a higher moral rating than intelligence or flexibility may, plausibly, be illuminating; but to imply, if only by omission, that he was at all exceptional in this may not only seem to exaggerate his originality as a political theorist (a rare danger, admittedly, when dealing with Conservative Prime Ministers), but it may also impoverish our understanding of how his presentation of the issues of politics resonated with the existing moral categories of the different audiences he was addressing.

Needless to say, having a lofty reviewer paint out such problems from a safe distance is about as useful as the visiting staff-officer's exhortation that the enemy must be out-manoeuvred. Still, on a more limited front it can be done, as Deryck Schreuder shows in the most satisfying (and, by some way, the longest) essay in the book, that on "Gladstone and Conscience of the State". Many a brave scholar has been hypnotized into immobility by Gladstone's Houdini-like capacity to escape from the unwelcome conclusions of his own moral principles, and after reading accounts of several of these performances one instantly warms to Lahouchère's remark, cited by Professor Schreuder, that he did not mind there being an ace up Mr G's sleeve, but he did object when the claim that Providence had put it there.

Providence's local office, in Mr G's scheme of things, was the Established Church, and Schreuder's essay is a meditative examination of the development of Gladstone's thinking about the moral agency of a state church. Which raises a reservation on the young author of *The State in its Relations with the Church* that his "great object is the religionizing of the state" cannot run to be prophetic, but what it would have been hard to foresee in 1838 was the way in which a spiritualized democracy would come to supplant an established church in Gladstone's pursuit of this object. His aim was always "the greatest holiness of the greatest number", but by the end of his life his view of the moral resources of the citizenry resembled the principle he learned from schools-playground games: many are called but few are chosen.

Overall, the essays present a variegatedly different perspective on some of the traditional questions of political historians, and will presumably make up to date of us readers. In his introduction the editor announces that "the persuasive influence of moral argument in nineteenth-century Britain", which needs explanation, and although a book of this kind cannot aspire to meet that need, it will be something if potential historians take its existence seriously in the future. Some readers may feel saddened, revealed by the discovery, of how Helmstadter's discussion of the decline of a distinctively nonconformist cultural identity, in the 1880s "even Spurgeon took holidays on the Riviera and had a carriage and pair".

All change

By John Naughton

ALVIN TOFFLER:
The Third Wave
544pp. Collins. £8.95.
0 00 211847 5

Alvin Toffler is a former *Time-Life* journalist who has cornered the futures market. Some might say that he has merely bludgeoned it into submission by a combination of open contempt for the English language and a gargantuan appetite for "facts". He first sprang to prominence with a book entitled *Future Shock* in which he described—and purported to analyse—the phenomenon of incessant change. In this earlier work (which, incidentally, is still selling like hot cakes) Mr Toffler emphasized the personal and social costs of change—a phenomenon which he likened to an endemic disease of industrialized society. In his latest book, *The Third Wave*, he seems to have moved from this position towards one which emphasizes the costs of not changing things rapidly enough. The divergence between the two positions does not appear to discomfit him unduly.

But then consistency is not Mr Toffler's strong suit. What is needed, he now opines, "is a book of large-scale synthesis" which "describes the old civilization in which many of us grew up, and presents a careful, comprehensive picture of the new civilization bursting into being in our midst". For some years he has laboured (and travelled) mightily to bring such a synthesis to fruition. He has sampled divers technical literatures like a demented intellectual dipstick, interviewed legions of people with the exhaustive assiduity of a former Fortune employee, connected his typewriter to a computerized, randomly collated thesaurus, and brought forth *The Third Wave*.

Surveying it, one is tempted to observe (pace Johnson) that second books represent the triumph of hope over experience. At any rate, *The Third Wave* suggests that the obsession with dubious statistics which disfigured *Future Shock* has now reached a pathological stage. No basic symptom is on inability even to sketch the bones of an argument without dragging in every scrap of numerical data which might conceivably be relevant. Thus, in the middle of a discussion of changing work patterns, Mr Toffler informs us that "in the Detroit area an estimated 65 per cent of the total workforce of the J. L. Hudson department stores consists of part-timers". This negligible "fact" is then buttressed by the further intelligence that Prudential Insurance employs some 1600 part-time workers in its US and Canadian offices and that "15 to 20 per cent" of all industrial firms in Switzerland have switched to "flexitime". And so on, seemingly ad *infinitum* and certainly *ad nauseam*.

Mr Toffler's use of statistical data is, one suspects, symptomatic either of deep-seated psychological insecurity or of the epistemological delusion which leads people to confuse illustration with proof. He roams the world and pillages its data-banks with but a single idea in mind, namely finding confirmations of his *a priori* views. The notion of using data to test a hypothesis seems completely alien to him; refutation, for Mr Toffler, is a consummation devoutly to be avoided.

This might be acceptable, I suppose, if he were opportunistic, or if he displayed even the glimmer of an awareness of the methodological significance of his modus operandi. But he isn't and he doesn't, presenting instead the image of someone engaged on an open-minded, open-ended quest for the patterns of social evolution. These patterns he calls "waves", of which there have been, by his reckoning, three in recorded human history. The first was the agricultural revolution. The second was industrialization which began with the industrial revolution and is now exhausting itself, having fuelled up the biosphere and destroyed its resource base in the process. The "third wave" of the book's title is that of the microprocessor and of information-processing generally—a wave which is now washing over the Western world and threatening (promising?) to revolutionize it.

Mr Toffler's mission is to describe this third wave and to give some indication of where it is propelling us. The main plank of his approach is one that will be familiar to Marxists, namely the notion that social evolution is a constant process of adaptation to the "objective" reality of changing forces of production and technology generally. Therefore the key to understanding the future, he argues, lies in anticipating how society will accommodate the microprocessor. Q.E.D.

But what form precisely—or even roughly—will this accommodation take? Mr Toffler, for all his bravura, travel, in-depth and up-front research, doesn't really know—though it takes him 459 pages to say so. What he does know is that predicting the future is terribly difficult, because everything in society eventually affects everything else. Thus, the new microprocessor and associated technologies will change not only our hardware, but also our governments, nations, markets, work patterns, religions, mores, families, careers, Uncle Tom Cobley and all.

So what? We knew that already. What we really want to know is whether anyone has any insight into the precise nature of the connections between technology and "everything else", or even some idea of the degree and extent of impending changes. Given that he is no more prophetic than the rest of us, Mr Toffler fills out his pages with discussions of what could conceivably happen. Since, in principle, almost anything could happen, this gives him plenty of scope. Oddly enough, however, the images of the future he paints himself seems to place most emphasis on those trends which are already happening already: the "withering away" of the nuclear family, "demassification" (his word) of the mass media; growing power of consumers; the Do-It-Yourself movement; the collapse of traditional political alliances; and so forth.

If this all sounds pretty familiar, then I am afraid it is. Despite all the hype, Mr Toffler has produced neither the "large-scale synthesis" nor the "careful, comprehensive picture" of which he writes in his introduction. What he has spawned is a mediocre, over-long self indulgent work of quite astonishing mediocrity. Its omissions are numerous and its central claims of expanding the reader's intellectual horizons end up merely having him to embrace change as initiated by its repetitious, self-congratulatory structure and feeble style. *The Third Wave* delivers as little as it promises much: its hyperbole and fantasy for imaginative contemplation, and its banal conclusion that "for everything there is the same thing as a season" and so on. It could have been written by a visitor from Mars who had read a few issues of the Sunday Times.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

DIRECTOR OF THE CLARK LIBRARY PROGRAM IN SEVENTEENTH- AND EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY STUDIES

The University of California, Los Angeles, invites nominations and applications for the Directorship of its Clark Library Program in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Studies.

The William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, which constitutes an integral part of UCLA's unified library system, is internationally renowned for its specialized holdings in the field of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British culture and has long served as a centre for a variety of scholarly activities in that area. These include seminars, lectures, research, publications and fellowship programs.

The position to be filled requires an energetic and enterprising scholar with a distinguished record of research and publication and academic credentials which will qualify him or her for a high-level professorial appointment, with tenure, in an appropriate department of the College of Letters and Science at UCLA. The successful candidate will be expected to assume responsibility for directing the ongoing Clark Library Program, for strengthening its current base of financial support, and for extending its geographical range of academic interest in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century studies. The Director will also be expected to participate as a regular faculty member in the instructional program of the department to which he or she is appointed. Salary is open.

Applications, nominations and recommendations should be sent to Executive Vice-Chancellor W. D. Schaefer, Office of the Chancellor, UCLA, Los Angeles, California 90024 U.S.A. Deadline for applications is January 12, 1981. UCLA is an Affirmative Action-Equal Opportunity Employer.

PUBLIC & UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

CHAIR OF ENGLISH

APPLICATIONS are invited for the CHAIR of ENGLISH which may be in the fields of English Language/Linguistics or in English Literature. The Chair is in the Department of English Studies and Comparative Literature and is expected to carry with it headship of the Department.

Applicants should have strong academic qualifications in some aspects of the work of the English Studies section of the Department which covers the full range of English Literature from Chaucer to the Twentieth Century and English language and linguistics interests.

Annual salary (superannuable) will be within the range/scale HK$[illegible] (£ equals HK$[illegible] approximately).

At current rates, salaries tax will be payable at a rate of gross income. Housing at a rental of 15 per cent of salary, education allowance, leave and medical benefits are provided.

Further particulars and application forms may be obtained from the Secretary (Staff), Association of Commonwealth Universities (Appts.), 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PF, or from the Recruitment Section, Secretary's Office, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong.

The closing date for applications is December 15, 1980.

LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD

JUNIOR RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP IN ECONOMICS

The College proposes to elect from graduates of either sex under the age of 28 on 1st October, 1981, for a Junior Research Fellowship in Economic Science, tenable three years from October, 1981. Further particulars and application form may be obtained from the Rector, Lincoln College, Oxford OX1 3DH, to whom applications should be submitted by 8th November, 1980.

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

CHAIR IN SPANISH

The University proposes to make an appointment to a Chair in the DEPARTMENT of HISPANIC and LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES which will become vacant on the retirement of Professor J. C. J. Metford on July 31, 1981.

Candidates with suitable qualifications in language, literature or history are invited to submit applications by December 1, 1980. Further particulars of the appointment may be obtained from the Registrar and Secretary, 19 Tyndall's Park, Clifton House, Bristol, BS8 1TH.

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

CHAIR IN FRENCH

The University proposes to make an appointment to a Chair in FRENCH which will become vacant on the retirement of Professor E. Grimsley on July 31, 1981.

Suitably qualified candidates are invited to submit applications by December 1, 1980. Further particulars of the appointment may be obtained from the Registrar and Secretary of the University, Senate House, Bristol, BS8 1TH.

All advertisements are subject to the conditions of acceptance of Times Newspapers Ltd, copies of which are available on request.

JORDANHILL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, GLASGOW

CHIEF CATALOGUER

Applications are invited from Chartered Librarians, preferably graduates, with substantial relevant experience, for the post of Chief Cataloguer in the College Library from January, 1981. Salary Scale: NJC Administrative and Professional Scale V: £7,077-£7,731 (pending revision).

Further particulars and application form can be obtained from the Personnel Officer, Jordanhill College of Education, 76 Southbrae Drive, Glasgow G13 1PP, to whom completed forms should be returned by 14th November, 1980.

e uses of reason

rah Coakley

HEBBLETHWAITE:
Meaning of Theology
Cambridge University Press.
Paperback, £2.95).
521604 3

NEWLANDS:
Story of the Love of God
Collins. £3.50.
015827 2

Appearance of these two books Cambridge theologians invites question that it is possible to ask in a rough and ready way, mainstream "Cambridge". Brian Hebblethwaite's *Problems of Theology*, an history methodological work, an admirably lucid discussion the place of theology in University, and at the same though this is not a stated point) reads something like a of the present Cambridge in theology and religious Hebblethwaite argues that is *rational* though about open and self-critical", and such only be undertaken by Fathers and unbelievers alike. It single method, and certainly "private logic"; instead, "an every critical method must be out and pursued as far as it go". Adjacent subjects as psychology, anthropology, history and philosophy, are all grist to the theological and what distinguishes the Christian from the practitioner of religious studies" is his is duck the issue of truth be, inevitably raised in phenomenological" study of the

Hebblethwaite next tackles the of how to adjudicate between truth claims, and recommends the "cumulative case" whereby a range of arguments, none of them individually conclusive, can none the less cumulatively. This method at least in principle, the of demonstrating the superiority of Christianity (Hebblethwaite takes this to be "a prime task of Christian theology") and the book ends with the author's now familiar arguments for the Christian doctrines of Trinity and incarnation. Together, Hebblethwaite argues, these doctrines state the essentially Christian belief that "the infinite and eternal God, who brought the world into being and sustains its whole evolving history, made himself known . . . as being essentially self-sacrificial love, by coming into our midst himself".

This might have been written as a summary of George Newlands's *Theology of the Love of God*, which, while being different in genre and style (it is a work of systematic theology) shares Hebblethwaite's contention that here is something inseparably central to Christian belief. Thus both books are critical of *The Myth of God Incarnate*, though Newlands is undoubtedly more sympathetic to its authors' difficulties than his colleagues. Difficulties and complexity, in fact, are what Newlands feels characterize the present theological climate more than anything else, and in his constant desire to anticipate criticisms from all sides his writing often takes on a darting, vaguely paranoid style which makes his direction hard to follow. (At other times, it must be said, there are brilliant flashes of wit: how rare that is for any theologian, ancient or modern.) But the central contention of the book is that love, rather than faith and hope (which have both enjoyed vogueo in recent Germon theology) deserves to be the *Leitmotiv* of theological reflection on God. The nature of that love as "self-giving, self-abandoning and self-affirming" is supremely revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. And "the incarnation is itself an inner renewal of creation, an opening up of a new dimension of love . . . a natural 'second stage' in God's bringing of creation to fulfillment".

Newlands's commitment to Trinitarianism and his attraction to the paradoxes of a *theologia crucis* ("God is radically hidden in his presence", etc) suggest special influence from Moltmann and Jüngel. In discussing Moltmann, Newlands is rightly critical of his metaphysical naivety: *how* exactly does God himself suffer abandonment on the cross, and how is he changed by this? Against Newlands, though, one might want to utter a *tu quoque*. It is not clear that he offers any further explanation, though he certainly demands such of others. He himself concludes: "How God may make death overcome into his own experience . . . we shall never . . . be able to say."

Hebblethwaite and Newlands share not only doctrinal emphases, but also a firm commitment to rational argumentation in theology (Newlands too approves of "cumulative cases"), a desire to avoid special pleading, an unwavering insistence on the application of a corresponden theory of truth in theological claims, and an acute appreciation of the importance of the historical in Christian faith (in all this the influence of their teacher Donald MacKinnon, former Norris-Hulse Professor at Cambridge, is strongly felt. Yet there are also gaps.

Doubts about appeals to experience, and an excessive emphasis on the cerebral side of religion, lead Hebblehwaite to demote the study of liturgy and ritual to a relatively unimportant position, and to understand "myth" as doing nothing more than express a doctrinal proposition in "dramatic" or "pictorial" form. Perhaps similar pressures cause Newlands (ostensibly more positive towards experience as a theological criterion, but distrusting "smoke-screens of piety and liturgy") to mention prayer only twice in the course of his book, and then only fleetingly—surely a strange omission in a work devoted to the love of God. Certainly to Hebblehwaite one would want to counter that the wholly admirable insistence that theological debate be clear and rational is one thing, but the tendency to restrict the *inputs*, or raw material, on which that debate is based to the rationally comprehensible is quite another. But then such strengths and omissions may well be explained by the particular tradition of theological teaching at Cambridge, a tradition still primarily centred on philosophical and biblical study, a tutor discipline than that of religious studies, certainly, but arguably less rich in scope.

terim ethics

Elizabeth Moberly

COLEMAN:
Attitudes to Homo-
SPCK. £8.50.
3756 6

Christians in their approach to sexuality have moved like treading delicately", it is going to see the growing willto discuss the question and in depth. Peter Cola-*Christian Attitudes to Homo-*, the latest contribution to this, is the most comprehensive and should prove an indispensable handbook for all concerned the basis and development of Christian attitudes. Peter Coleman Lecturer and a priest, who teaches Ethics at Bristol Univer-was a member of the of England working-party produced the report *Homo-Relationships* in 1979.

author acknowledges a debt gratitude to Sherwin Bailey, pioneer work *Homosexuality Western Christian Tradi-*reissued in 1975 by Archon Connecticut) has not the for Christian writing on the for the past twenty-five At the same time, Coleman's is much wider in scope than Bailey's, and brings the of Christian attitudes up to present time. The scriptural alone covers a hundred and one may note that Sher-Bailey's denial of sexual alleg-in the story of Sodom and Gath is queried in favour of a conservative interpretation. prohibition of homosexual is traced through subse-Christian pronouncements, and of the human implications indicated by accounts of per-from Oscar Wilde onwards—public standing was affected revelation of their private lives. Thus far the traditional Christian viewpoint goes unquestioned. At this point Coleman undertakes to trace the contemporary diversification in christian attitudes, from the early 1950s onwards, and he concludes with a call for an interim ethic, Coleman—like the Church of England working-party as a whole—is clearly dissatisfied with a simple restatement of the traditional ethic, but at the same time hesitates to move definitively towards a more radical position.

The inadequacy of the traditional ethic is stated to lie in the need to take seriously the data now available about human sexuality. Thus, Coleman prefaces his detailed theological survey with some comments on the development of medical and psychological views. This section is disappointing. Both here and in his concluding remarks, Coleman underestimates the contemporary prevalence of the psychodynamic understanding of homosexuality. The suggestion that "no present day analytical psychologist would conduct his profession al work exactly in the terms set out by Freud" is correct, if only because the term "analytical psychologist" is normally reserved for followers of Jung. Terminological quibbles apart, there are more major points to be taken into account. The importance attached to interpersonal factors has not wanted. Likewise, it is inaccurate to suggest that the understanding of homosexuality as a state of incomplete development is merely an "early psychological view", with the implication that such an evaluation has now been superseded. Above all, the psychological evidence as a whole is seen as both varied and inconclusive, and this hardly suggests an adequate basis for a considered change in the Christian evaluation of homosexual behaviour.

A particular example of this pertains to therapeutic difficulties. The uncertainty of treatment procedures, and the reluctance of many homosexuals to seek treatment, are presented as major points in the case for increasing liberalization. The logic of this seems doubtful, and the call for a revised ethical judgment should not be allowed to rest on such tenuous foundations. The variety of data, and a measure of therapeutic pessimism, can only suggest the need for a deeper and more detailed grappling with psychological evidence and principles.

The recent diversification of Christian thought is well documented, as is Coleman's whole survey of Christian attitudes. Three views are discussed—the conservative, the more or less liberal, and the radical—and it is to the author's credit that his presentation of each position seems fair and unpolemical. His survey takes the reader up to 1979, to which year Anglicans, Roman Catholics and Methodists alike were actively involved in debating the homosexual question. Coleman refers to these as "three reconciling reports".

However, to be criticized by conservatives and radicals alike is not of itself proof of having reached the right *via media*. In this connection, it is surprising that Coleman refers only briefly to the distinction between the homosexual condition and homosexual activity, and dismisses it as irrelevant. In a study of Christian attitudes this is a significant oversight, which can only complicate the question of re-evaluation. Hostility to the homosexual condition should certainly have no place in the Christian fellowship. This must be emphasized. But to press for the acceptance of homosexual activity is quite another matter, and the two are by no means equivalent concerns.

Coleman's own tentative liberalization is clearly linked with a profound sense of pastoral concern. This concern has led him to enter the debate publicly, and he will doubtless receive much criticism as a result. However, it should be made clear that his chief purpose in writing has been fulfilled. As a history of Christian attitudes to homosexuality, Coleman's book is a magnificent study and deserves the widest possible audience.